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BURTON

N. J. W. LE CATO

Le Cato

TOM BURTON.

IN PRESS:

By the same Author.

AUNT SALLY'S BOY JACK.

A NOVEL.

To appear complete in the August Number of

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TOM BURTON;

OR, THE DAYS OF '61.

BY

N. J. W. LE CATO.

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Dedication.

TO TULLY A. JOYNES, JR.

MY DEAR TULLY:

More than once in my life I have felt like Tell in Knowles' celebrated play, when he asks, "Have I a friend in this crowd?" And in casting about for some sympathetic face I can truly say, I have never seen yours averted. Please accept, my dear Tully, this poor acknowledgment of a friendship I hold more dear than any I have on earth. And believe me,

Ever yours,

THE AUTHOR.

Smith Book Co. 27 Sept 1921

TOM BURTON.

A VIRGINIA STORY OF THE STIRRING DAYS OF '61.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

RUNNING THE BLOCKADE.

"Now, this is right smart misfortionable, Sammy, to hev to wait here arter this fashion when the wind is dyin' out and the moon already sot, and we uns lyin' here jest doin' a nuthin', like onto a stingary stuck into the back with a harpoon. Why in thunder don't he come along, I want ter know."

"Gin him time to kiss her 'good-bye,' uncle. It 'll be a long while afore he has the apportunity to see her agin, ef he ever does, and it's mighty hard a partin' under those circumstances, you must allow."

"So it ware, Sammy, so it ware. I'll ecknowledge it's werry misfortionable; but at the same time, my boy, the sooner them partin' scenes is over the better it 'll be for both ev them. Besides, it's high water and arter, and we uns had better be a movin' away from these localities. This here breeze of wind are none too fresh now to speak ev, and them 'ar Fedrals out thar in the bay are pesky hard fellers to fool, you know."

Captain Evans said this with the air of one who knew what he was talking about, and as he finished the last sentence he twirled a spray of tobacco juice from his mouth, half spitefully, into the water, and changed his enormous quid leisurely from one side to the other of his capacious jaws. Accomplishing this oft-repeated feat, he settled down into the stern sheets of his little boat with a groan of impatience and decided to wait.

The boat referred to was a canoe called sometimes in derision "a dug-out," many of them being built of a single tree and dug-out like a trough.

In the bow of this narrow craft was standing a tall, triangular sail, which was flapping idly from side to side as the canoe, rocked by the surge of the waves, careened first one way and then the other. The surf was not high, but could be heard up and down the beach in a monotonous swash which seemed to play a dreary duet with the sough of the tall pines which stood all along the shore, just in the rear of a line of sand hills which marked a treeless waste for miles and miles.

The boy Sammy was a youth of seventeen or eighteen, and stood just abaft the clew of the sail, holding out an oar on the shore-side to keep the craft afloat.

The night was waning, and the wind dying out. The dewy zephyrs seemed to be sighing themselves to sleep in the tops of the pines.

A few rods from where the boat lay in the shadow of the thicket, a young Confederate captain was taking leave of his promised bride.

It is proper to relate the circumstances. It was late in the month of November, 1861. The eastern shore of Virginia had that very day been reclaimed by the Federal Government. The one lone regiment which had vainly attempted for many months to defend the Peninsula had disbanded at discretion, and Captain Walsingham, like many others of the disorganized battalion, was attempting to escape to the other side of the Chesapeake.

The motive which prompted this isolated people to take up arms in the beginning, was either pure patriotism as they held patriotism to be—allegiance to the State—or else pure foolishness.

Separated entirely from the parent State, and beyond all hope of help from the new Government at Richmond, there was little prospect for anything else but disaster. After vainly trying to defend their long line of sea and bay coast, and the Maryland border, some of those brave men were unwilling to surrender, and, under cover of this November night, were endeavoring to cross over into Dixie as best they might.

Claude Walsingham, the gentleman before designated as Captain, was one of these.

He had taken the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy, sworn to give his service for life or death to it for three years or the war, and under no condition would he be prevailed upon

to surrender to the enemy while the ghost of a chance remained for him to escape to the other side.

The young lady to whom he had but lately engaged himself, and for whom, like every other young lover, he had professed the fondest devotion, had accompanied him to the bay shore to see him off and bid him God-speed, while her father waited at a respectful distance for the end of this trying scene.

There, in the darkness of the pine woods and the bitterness of the parting hour, they plighted again those vows of eternal fidelity which lovers know so well how to make, and which, alas! are some times broken or disregarded with the same facility, if not with the same emotions, in which they are given.

He, of course, was gentle and tender, sustaining in his language, and profuse in pictures of future glory and future happiness; while she bedews his manly check with love's first gush of uncontrollable grief.

That the scene was sad goes without saying.

How dirge-like to both their hearts was the low cadence of the sighing trees! How desolate the ceaseless echo of the waves along the shore! Nature seemed to sympathize with her poor suffering children, who, short-sighted and inexperienced, saw not the future that was spread out before them, but which had nothing in reality in it which, in a prophetic sense, appeared very promising.

If it did, why did Kate Moore, the affianced bride, feel so stricken and hopeless as she stood there, tall and graceful as she was, leaning on the shoulder of the taller, stronger soldier? Why did she linger, weeping, if there came to her agonized heart no presentiment of evil from the solemn surroundings, whispering to her in language she understood scarcely, but sufficiently to know that there were trials for her in the days that were to come even greater than the one she was then passing through?

With the gentleness of a young husband, the handsome officer led the young lady to her father, kissed her hand, grasped that of the old man fervently, and then, with firm-set mouth, and hasty step, strode down the beach toward the waiting canoe.

"He are a comin' at last!" exclaimed the boy as he caught sight of the tardy passenger through the straggling trees.

Captain Evans rose up, yawned, and replied.

"That am a fact truth, Sammy. Put in your oar now, honey, and git to rights to sprit your sail out a little better:

and look out thar and don't skin your shins over that bar'l of whisky and them boxes in the bottom ev the cunner. Quynine and whisky are werry waluable merchandise over thar in Dixie." Then in the same strain of voice he continued: "Step right down into the cunner, Captain Walshingham. You kin jest occurpy that middle thwart thar and make yourself as comfortable as you kin. I hate to see you looking so solemcholly over your partin'; its werry misfortionable, I know; but its war times and can't be prevented, so we must make the best ev it we kin." In this way the old sailor ran on while Captain Walsingham was adjusting himself to his new quarters. But the young soldier was melancholy nevertheless. He bowed his head and covered his face with his hands.

It was in fact to his proud and haughty spirit the first check, to his patriotic hopes the first damper, to his estimate of the future the first evil omen of the lost cause.

These sensations, however, were but momentary after all. Why should one single failure be of such consequence? What was the loss of two insignificant counties to the victories of Big Bethel and Bull Run?

"In the limitless fields and forests of the Sunny South there is still room enough for liberty. There are thousands of impregnable haunts for freedom even when all Virginia shall have succombed to the ruthless invader. He is this very night, I know, desecrating the land of my birth; but I shall come again to this very shore covered with glory, exulting in the satisfaction of having won for posterity the freedom of a Confederacy that shall rival the splendor of Rome in her palmiest days."

"Thar, thar; do shove the cunner around, Sammy. Gineral Jackson and Pocahontas! don't be so lubberly. Look at the fool stickin' his paddle right ahead ev the boat, as though he never seed a cunner afore. Thar, that's a little better. Now, put in your soap-stick and set her over to the sail so it'll draw. So 'We'll drive them British from our shores in spite of old King George!' Now let her go fer Dixie," and Captain Evans, who was a moment ago fretting and fuming at the youth as if he could bite off his head, sat himself down to his work of guiding the boat with as jolly a heart as ever beat in the bosom of any old tar that sailed the blue ocean.

Captain Walsingham raised his head and looked out upon the dark water. The shore had receded from sight, and the great bay lay around on every side; its deeper undulations causing the little bark to rise and fall like a chip on the waves.

"Where do you expect to land?" he ventured to inquire of the old man.

"I are aimin' to fetch Lynn Haven bay, sir, prowided the flood tide is not too strong, and doosn't cut us too fur up the roads, toward the fort; and prowided furthermore, as the lawyers say, them 'ar gun-boats hain't a lyin' off thar by the Rip Raps a waitin' fur we uns, we uns must try to arwoid them if possible. It would be werry misfortionable to git picked up by one ev them fellers." Then turning to the boy, he continued:

"Sammy, drot your soul, don't set thar and go fast ter sleep and tumble overboard! Ef you don't keep a sharp lookout we uns will run hell-to-split right straight into one ev them blockaders presently. Thar's allus some of them lyin off thar by the pint ev the Horseshoe, a keepin' watch fer sich as we uns with a plenty ev good whisky and quynine aboard. 'We'll drive them British from our soil—"

"Do you think there is any immediate danger of being captured, captain," interrupted Captain Walsingham.

"I don't exactly know what you mean by remediate danger, sir, but thar is allus danger in this business, and in these waters, at sich times. Why, my dear sir, we uns is jest as likely to wake up in Fortress Monroe to-morrow mornin' as in Norfolk, and a great sight likelier ef that boy goes to sleep thar on that thwart. But upon my honor, sir, this is all talk and no cider, and as long as its gittin' kinder chilly out here in this night a'r, with consent, Captain Walshingham, we'll take a smile. Retch me here that bottle, Sammy, thar in the basket. That un what has the corn-cob stopper in it. Yes, that's the one. Pass it to the gentleman first, and don't forgit your manners."

The boy did as he was bidden, Captain Walsingham did not refuse but drank heartily.

"Don't be afeard ev it. Thar is plenty more in the bar'l." The cavalry officer took a second draught and then passed. "Here's hopsin we may hev good luck to git over safe and sound."

"But do you not give the boy some also," inquired Walsingham when he saw the old fellow placing the bottle under the stern sheets.

"Who? Sammy! why, bless your sweet soul, it was a mortal sin to larn that child to drink liquor. His angel mother, my sister, would think her boy eternally disgraced ef she war reware he ever teched a drap of the critter. No, Captain Walshingham; I drinks a mite now and then—nothin'

to say more nor a quart or sich a matter a day—but its as far from my retention as the east is from the west to set a bad example fur that boy. He's my lovin' sister's only son, as I before intermated, and she's almighty 'ligious and particular. It 'll do fur him to drink when he gits grown like we uns.

"But! shaw, the wind are entirely died out and the flood tide are cuttin us up the bay two knots an hour. Ef you will take the helm, Captain Walshingham, and keep a good lookout ahead, Sammy an me'll snatch the life outen her."

Captain Revel Evans was a character. Tall, large, and muscular, with a face like a Roman, and a hand and foot like a Titan; in disposition as docile as a child when not aroused, in courage and endurance a Hercules. No man could be better suited to the arduous duties of the occupation he had chosen. He and Sammy, his nephew, had been plying their vocation for several months, buying supplies in Baltimore and shipping them down to the eastern shore, taking them across the bay to Richmond and Norfolk in this way. There was money in whisky and medicine; especially in quinine, which was in great demand in the Southern army. Besides the captain was a regularly commissioned spy for the new government, and carried the mails to and from the eastern shore.

They were now midway between the capes, and the darkness of the night had increased.

Neither from Cape Charles nor Cape Henry came a gleam of light. The rebels had long since demolished these friendly beacons, and only a light-ship anchored off the entrance to the bay, and a light-house farther up the roads, called the Thimbles, remained to guide the benighted mariner.

Now and then the glimmer of a gun-boat's signal shot across the water, or the fiery course of a rocket might be seen cleaving the blackness of night with a meteor-like suddenness only to disappear as suddenly, leaving the darkness more intense than before.

The surface of the bay lay like undulating glass. Captain Evans and the boy tugged at the oars.

"Pull away thar, Sammy; only don't make sich a racket with your oar, and don't forgit to keep the muffled part into the rowlock. Those waters are as thick with gun-boats as a clover patch are with bumble-bees in the month ev June, and they kin hear equerlized to a black duck."

"Hold easy!" hissed Captain Walsingham in a manner as excited as if he had seen a ghost.

"Hello, what's up now?" demanded Captain Evans.

"Just look there to the right," rejoined the other.

"A starboard you mean." Captain Evans changed his tobacco, turned his head and looked in the direction indicated. Then spitting spitefully between his yet sound front teeth, said:

"A crusier; and its rather misfortionable that she's comin' this way."

"It's all up with us, I guess," dolefully suggested Walsingham.

"That mought be or mought not be. Thar are other ways to kill his Satanic magester than chokin' him to death with a ropeyarn, I'se hearn say. Lay in your soup-stick, Sammy, easy, and you and the Captain jest dive down into the bottom ev the cunner on your bellies while I see if I kin contrive to fool that fellow, and work we uns outten this scrape. Don't roach your rump up like a darned whale, Sammy! Can't you straighten yourself out like a lizard on a log in the sunshine? Down, I say, both ev you uns!"

The fact was, there was at least four inches of water in the bottom of the canoe which did not feel very pleasant to the boy as he splashed down into it.

"Lay low, boys! its all-fired misfortionable fur us to lose all this good whisky and fever-and-ager medicine. Them yellow-finned Johnnies over thar on the western sho, stand werry much in need ev both. Ef that gun-boat gits too nigh I shall remit to the mighty deep, and then all them fishes will go onto an almighty spree, sure."

As the old man ran on in this fashion he was lying down low along the gunwale of the canoe watching the maneuvers of the dangerous craft, and directing the course of his own with a short paddle which he kept for that purpose.

The former was evidently approaching the blockade runners.

Four minutes passed with the tardiness of an hour, and there was yet no perceptible difference in the relative positions of the two boats. Captain Evans' efforts very nearly compensating for the forward movement of the steamer.

"She seems to be takin' her time, honeys, but she are reproachin' all the same. May be I mought move the cunner a little faster and tharby git outten the way of that Yankee." Thus saying he gave the little boat two or three strong strokes which sent her gliding through the water like a frightened fish. But the effort did not seem to accomplish any good. The gun-boat was still slowly bearing down upon them. She forged ahead suddenly, and appeared to be going to pass on the port

side of the canoe, for she was nearly abreast of the latter.

"The only danger now is," whispered Captain Evans, "that that officer standing thar with his night-glass in his hand may see we uns and bring us to. So lie low, my honeys, lie low."

It was impossible for Sammy and Walsingham to get down any lower into the bottom of the canoe unless they went through on the other side. It was only for lack of ability that they did not; so badly were both of them frightened.

But all their precautions were of no avail. The man in the pilot-house struck his bell, and almost simultaneously was sent over the water the well-known call:

"Boat ahoy!"

"Stand up, men; stand up boldly!" commanded the intrepid master of the canoe.

Without hesitating to consider the danger of the act, or indeed knowing what they did, the boy and his companion leaped to their feet.

"Don't be afeared, stand up high. Them Yankees can't see your complexion.

"Boat ahoy there!" was repeated from the gun-boat.

"Yes sah. Hello, who is you, Norf men or Souf men?"

"Who are you in that canoe, there?"

"We is cullud folks, sir, a lookin" fur de freedom. Please, sah, ef ye be from de Norf, help us poor niggahs. We is lost in de bay."

"What are you doing out here so far from the shore in the night in that thing?"

"Didn't we done told you? Ef you be frens of de cullud people, please take we uns on board. I say we is lost.

"Go to ——," replied the man on the gun-boat. "You had better go back to your masters. We are not here to look out for niggers, If I catch you rowing about here after this I'll run you down as sure as the devil's a Dutchman. Do you hear?" and with that the Yankee sailed away.

"Now, sit down thar, Sammy, like a man, and giv it to her, and don't be shakin' like a aspen leaf. Come, Captain Walsingham, let you and me take a pull at the mainbrace."

"The cleverest thing I ever saw done in my life," said the latter, after taking a long breath and a longer "pull" at the bottle. "How could you take such a risk?"

"Why, you see, them 'ar naval fellers ain't much on the nigger question, nohow, so I took the chance. Ef you went round with me and Sammy you'd soon learn the ropes. You must keep your wits about you, Captain, even if you is goin'

to fight a goose, which am an old sayin', you know. Lay back on her, Sammy, and I will resist you to rights."

Thus, by dint of drifting, sailing, and rowing our three voyagers entered Lynn Haven, a small arm of the Chesapeake, putting up into Princess Ann County, about ten miles inside of Cape Henry, just as the sun was rising through the pine woods along the shore. Here they were met by the Confederate coast-guard, which was stationed in this vicinity, and, being conducted to their camp, were welcome recipients of their generous hospitality, which consisted of a breakfast of roasted oysters, fried fish and sweet potatoes.

"Now, honeys," said the old blockader to the soldiers, as he wiped the grease from his expansive jaws and hid a good sized potato at one mouthful, "as you uns are not supposed to be as hungry as we uns is, hadn't you better jest step down to the cunner and fetch up them things what's in 'er, and haul up the old critter under the cedars. I'm werry keerful, you see, for them cruisiers out thar to be looking at her through their spy-glasses all day. She am a purty craft, and they mought fall in love with her; leastwise, they mought suspect somethin' wrong ware goin' on, and come over here and give we uns a brush. When you uns hev done all that, ef you will come back I'll give ye as nice a jug ev old Jamaica as ye ever seed. Yes, as good liquor as ever ware tasted by the lips ev mortal man."

All of which orders and promise were thrown away on the soldiers, for they, having a perfect knowledge of the old man's ways, had executed his commands half an hour before they were uttered, and an ambulance loaded to its utmost capacity, drawn by two mules and driven by a negro, was already waiting by the roadside behind the woods, so that the old man had but to conclude his repast by finishing the viands and bestowing his compliments upon his kind friends, call his two companions to follow. and set out at once on his journey toward Norfolk.

Captain Walsingham was unusually bright and cheery after a night of little or no sleep and exciting adventure. The sight of Confederate soldiers, the first he had seen outside of his own little camp, in their fine gray uniforms, and the truly stimulating effects of a cup of warm coffee, gave a zest to this part of the journey that was so exhilarating that he soon forgot the dangers of the past night, and, with only the burden of the recollection of the dear one left behind, heard the crack of the driver's whip with gratification as the straining mules jogged off, and the old man and Sammy stretched themselves out on the barrels for a nap.

CHAPTER II.

A RETROSPECTION.

In order to become better acquainted with some of the minor causes which led to our civil war, as well as more fully to understand the local differences which distracted that portion of the country of which this narrative treats, it is proper for us to go back a few years before the epoch referred to in the preceding chapter, and review the events which bear so close a relation to the work which we have undertaken.

Situated on the brow of a slightly elevated piece of ground rising from the roadside of an old country road, in the county of Accomack, there stood in the first years of the sixth decade of the present century an old frame building.

It was long, low, and narrow, standing with its end to the road, and having narrow windows with old-fashioned seven by nine panes protected by wooden shutters, looked not unlike a country schoolhouse.

It required only a glance to satisfy the most casual and indifferent observer that nature had done far more to beautify the surroundings than art had, in decorating the building itself.

On every side of this prosy structure, even brushing its paintless and mossy roof with their umbrageous boughs, grew majestic sycamores, with here and there a sturdy oak, noble relics of primeval days, the tender buds of which were, at the time of which we write, just bursting into leaflets; while on the opposite side of the road, over in front, extended a dense forest for many miles. Immediately in the rear of the humble edifice, and flanking it on either side, was a graveyard, designated by some fresh mounds or old sunken pits, with scarcely as much as a shingle to mark the resting-place of some poor free negro or poorer white person.

The reader must remember that in those days rich people had their own private burying-grounds on their own premises—out in the cornfield and sometimes in the front yard of their homes, and only paupers were interred in the churchyards.

Behind this ridgy and uneven ground there meandered a crooked rail fence and beyond this spread out an oat-field, all

over which the green blades of the sprouting cereal were creeping toward the sun.

Following a custom learned in earlier days, when to be a dissenter even in the conservative colony of the Old Dominion was a felony, the Methodist people of this vicinity had built their meeting-house in a lonely place.

It went by the name of Burton's Meeting-house, in honor of the donor, one of the earlier converts to the new faith when Wesley and Whitfield were sowing the seeds of Methodism in America, and whose family descendants are far from being extinct in that part of Virginia to-day, still maintaining their family characteristics and clinging to the religion of their fathers. It must be remarked that religion was a gloomy thing in those old days. It can scarcely be denied that the Christianity of to-day is of a higher type than that of a hundred years ago, that there is progress in ecclesiasticism as well as in science, and that nothing so marks this growth as the difference which we see when we compare the mode of worship and the style of church architecture of to-day with what it was in the past; and to do this we have not to go back many years.

The sombre surroundings and solemn aspect of an old church in the Southern country, its neglected graves, its crumbling walls and falling roof-tree, carry us back to the times when religion was clothed in the winding-sheet of the dead, and when to enter the door of the church was to step down into the portals of the tomb itself. Thank God, men now take a more cheerful view of religion! Thank God, the Christian church is fast losing the musty odor of the grave-clothes it ought to have left forever in the empty tomb of its risen founder! But to proceed. It was Sunday. One of those typical days of its kind, so lifelike and natural that one would invariably keep it for Sunday even though one had lost the day of the week; a day that not only looked like Sunday, but felt like Sunday.

Such days as these come in spring-time, after the lapse of Easter, with its raw winds, and before the intense heat of Whitsuntide, in which the blue birds begin to sing and mate, the robins to think of keeping house; when the mist begins to shimmer along the distant coast line and the willwillet to frequent the wheat-fields.

It was at this season of the year in the olden times that the newly-appointed minister, fresh from his conference, came to meet his people on the new circuit; and they turned out in their best "bib-and-tucker" to meet him. How the memory

of such days brings back the idea of turnip-tops, hog's-jole, boiled chicken and bag pudding!

But to get right down to bottom facts, this Sunday we have been describing was the day appointed for the new preacher to make his appearance at Burton's Meeting-house; and, to judge from the crowds that were gathering, the whole country had turned out *en masse* to hear him. Along the road for miles up and down rolled carriage after carriage, varying in style from a coach and span to an ox cart; while sunbrowned farmer lads on well groomed plough nags rode proudly by, politely bowing to the blushing lasses whose gay-colored ribbons fluttered out from under the rolled up curtains of their father's vehicles, as they sat demurely by the side of their mother with a sprig of lilac or china-aster in their hands.

How the dandies increased the speed of their horses as they approach the church; coming up in grand style with a negro hostler swinging on behind the buggy in his shirt-sleeves and covered with dust and perspiration!

Clouds of dust roll up along the road. Horses neigh, mules bray, children cry, negroes shout as they ply their business of horse-taking; carts, buggies, dearborns, saddle horses, are crowded together in the thicket, hung up to the fence all around the grounds, and even desecrate the graveyard with their incessant pawing.

Across the fields and along every by-path come the walkers —old men with hickory walking sticks; boys eating pop-corn and walnuts, with which they had filled their capacious pockets before starting; girls sitting down under the huckleberry bushes on the pine straws to change their shoes and stockings! Surely there must be something more than a new preacher to call out so many people on this bright May day. It could scarcely be the sunshine; though God's sun never shone brighter. It could not be the odor of hyacinths or the smell of the pine woods. Had it been this or that, what need should there be of groups of serious men standing here and there discussing, as it seemed to be, one subject, and evidently displaying more interest in some matter or other than country people usually do in religion?

Why did women crane their heads out of the doors and windows of the meeting-house, and start as if with fright at every unusual sound. It could not have been mere womanly curiosity. Why did there stand at the gallery door, just around the corner, a little out of the sight of the white people, half a dozen old gray-headed negro men, wearing well worn

swallow-tail coats and antiquated plug hats; their ungainly limbs bent with age or made crooked with years of unremitting toil—why did these stand there as if they expected something great to happen, an expression of mingled pain and curiosity depicted on their coarse, but benign features?

Will you allow me to tell you? The story is an interesting one.

The feeling that slavery was not only wrong, but a great sin, had not been shared by the New Englanders alone. There were in early days—even in colonial times—as many abolitionists who were really so at heart, and upon a matter of principle, in the State of Virginia, as in Massachusetts.

Washington, Jefferson, Mr. G. W. P. Custis, and other distinguished master-spirits of the age were emancipationists—some of them in theory, many of them in fact, practically demonstrating their faith by manumitting their slaves—not selling them because they were unprofitable, and putting them into their pockets, but actually setting them free while they were yet valuable, and their progeny likely to become more so.

What a pity this wise philanthropic and politic plan could not have been allowed to go on and gradual emancipation been promoted throughout the South, a liberal system of education backing up the movement and paving the way to the civilization of the race. Well had it been for Virginia, if such wise counsels had prevailed! She would then have been spared the agony as well as the humilation of having the incubus removed by other people—whose fathers were equally guilty with herself in the beginning—with force of arms, and at the fearful cost of rivers of blood and immense treasure; and then to have suddenly engrafted upon her body politic a mass of ignorant voters, who had either to be cheated out of their newly conferred rights as citizens, or else permited to rule the State.

But no! Her people would have slavery or nothing; and any man who dared to say or think anything in opposition to the institution was at once outlawed and ostracized, until it arrived to that pitch that there was no mercy, here or hereafter, for that man who dared openly to assert that emancipation was right.

Jefferson was remembered for his pure democracy, Washington for his patriotism and devotion to his country; but never a word was ever uttered about the views which these great men entertained and expressed, on the subject of slavery. So well, in fact, did men love the institution that Washington and Jefferson might both go to the dogs, so slavery was maintained. So strong indeed was this infatuation, that

men possessing only a few thousand dollars invested their all in negro property, even after the alarming voice of war had sounded the death-knell of the nefarious traffic.

The longer it lasted and the more precarious the tenure, the more the politicians and law-makers tried to hedge it in, and to run hither and thither, like frightened ants, whose devoted hills had been invaded by some insurmountable difficulty, trying to find some means to preserve a social fabric so rotten that, if let alone, it would have fallen of its own weight in less than fifty years.

But how came the church to have anything to do with this matter? and in what connection was it associated with Burton's Meeting-house? Be patient, I will explain. The Methodist Episcopal Church in America, of all the influences which worked the final destruction of slavery, was, perhaps, the most potent. At each succeeding meeting of its general conference it formulated new expressions of antagonism, and invented new methods of attack. The time at last arrived when Northern and Southern brethren could no longer dwell together in unity. The Southern clergy raised the issue of the divine right to hold slaves, and by a strict and literal interpretation of the Bible, went far to prove their point. So well did they manage their side of the controversy, that the Northern debater let go his hold of argument and fortified himself behind the impregnable ramparts of the doctrine of a "higher law," and from that stronghold, believing in the righteousness of his cause, whether able to prove it by scripture or not, would not be moved from his trenches.

A division ensued, and by this division came a border. Ecclesiastically speaking, the eastern shore of Virginia was a part of this border. From the earliest days of Methodism her people had been furnished with pastors from the Philadelphia and Wilmington Conferences, so that, when the division took place, there were many members of the different societies who were averse to losing their old ministers, and the ministers their old flocks; not a few of the latter being bound to their Virginia friends by ties, not only of sacred fellowship, but also of consanguinity.

Party spirit unbecoming Christian communities soon became manifest, and threatened to end in violence.

The Northern Methodists held out firmly. Those who held to Southern views assumed the aggressive. Votes at first were taken to decide how a church should go. But this did not satisfy the public demand. It was decided that no Northern preacher should exercise the functions of his office

in that part of the State, either in or out of the church, and a band of men, containing some of the most influential and important persons in the community, was bound to resist the preaching of the gospel by men from Conferences north of Mason and Dixon's Line. Old Burton still held on to its allegiance. As if the spirit of the old bishops, nearly all of whom had preached there, from Coke down to Janes, still hovered about the place, and the voices of Dow and Hersey still echoed in its walls, Burton would not forget her first love. Here, in this old church, were a few names, even in Accomack, who had not defiled their garments.

To fill the pulpit of this church this day the new preacher was coming from the Philadelphia Conference, from whence he had been called by its membership, and to this place the mob had assembled on that memorable Sabbath to put him out; and if needs be, murder him.

The ground occupied by the church party was immediately in front of the meeting-house. The building was already filled to repletion by the women and children and the old men of the congregation. These latter were there in the amen corners praying for the safety of their beloved pastor, and believing in their souls that God would somehow or other deliver him out of the hands of his enemies.

The rioters had taken a position just over the road in the thicket, where they had improvised a bar over which a negro presided, and who measured out "Dutch courage" for them at ten cents a glass. From this rendezvous they issued in force about the time of service, headed by their chief. He was both young and handsome. His blonde mustache was scarcely visible in its faint outlines, arching a mouth almost faultless in shape. His hair was a light brown, and fell to his shoulders in profuse ringlets. There was grace and activity in all his motions, and he turned now and then on his heel to speak to his companions, or to cast a glance up or down the road; there was occasionally displayed the hilt of a bowie knife and the handles of a pair of duelling pistols, confined to his waist by a belt of leather. He was the observed of all observers. Curious urchins in nankeen trousers, and fustian jackets obtrusively shoved themselves through the crowd, that they might catch a sight of him.

Women cast furtive glances at him from the doors and windows of the church; some to shower maledictions upon his head, and others, with tokens of admiration. He was the hero of the day and played his *rôle* thus far gallantly. There was no doubt of his superiority, compared to common country folk.

His clothes were more in style and better in quality. His complexion smoother, his hands whiter. Even the jaunty manner in which he wore his slouch hat, showed him to be high-toned and *distingué*.

"He will not come. I knew he would not attempt to preach here to day. The Abolition scoundrel knows better than to presume upon the indulgence of a justly indignant people," he said, strutting up and down the road, as the hour for preaching began to pass without the expected dominie putting in his appearance.

Standing near enough to hear every word he said, and regarding him with a look of undisguised contempt, was another youth, scarcely as old, of rough exterior, plain attire, but comely in form, and with a face that was characteristic of firm determination and natural courage. Catching the boastful words of the leader of the mob, he waited for him to get through with his little speech, and then, stepping up in front of him, retorted:

"But he will come, Mr. Claude Walsingham, and he'll preach, too, so you may bet your bottom dollar on that."

The eyes of the other shot forth flames of fire as he clinched his teeth behind his thin lips and placed his right hand upon his hip, too much surprised and too indignant at first to reply.

A flutter of agitation ran through the motley crowd. There was slight applause among the church party, but hoots of derision from the rioters.

Taking a step forward toward his adversary, and curbing his temper with an effort, he spoke:

"Who are you, sir, who dares to speak with such high-sounding confidence? You had better go home, or you might get hurt. This is no place for such hobble-de-hoys as you appear to be."

"I am Tom Burton, the Abolitionist's son. My grandfather built that house; my mother and sister are in it to-day. If the preacher comes, and I am sure he will, you may depend upon it he will preach, or Tom Burton will be carried home on a barn door, so I give you fair warning."

"It is old Burton's son, sure enough," said half-a-dozen voices at once.

"And a lad 'll do what he says every time," echoed another old farmer, with a knowing shake of the head.

"See here," began the chief of the regulators, balked by the bravery of the boy as well as by the backing which was developing in his behalf, "we are not here to quarrel with you

church people. Far be it from our purpose to disturb religious worship. We are law-abiding citizens. Our business is rather to protect than frighten you. But we are determined your d—— Methodist preachers shall not tamper with and corrupt our negroes. They are only here to incite insurrection, and teach our slaves to butcher us."

"You lie, sir. The preachers do not interfere with our social or political affairs. There is not a shadow of truth in your accusations. If they were the sort of people you represent them to be, why do you not present them to the grand jury and punish them according to law? You know you have tried that and failed. Now you want to mob them. Go, speak to your cowardly, rum-sucking followers, and send them home and cease to profane God's holy day by disturbing the worship of his people."

The Methodists had not counted on such a bold champion. His burning words infused new life into them. They came running up to the scene from every quarter, creating a general confusion, in the midst of which the rumbling of fresh carriage wheels was heard, and the preacher, accompanied by one of the official members of the church, drove up and alighted. This timely circumstance turned attention in another direction. Claude Walsingham (for it was he who led the mob), sprang forward and seized the preacher by the arm. He had not more than done so, however, before he found himself crushed in the vise-like grasp of Tom Burton. His hold on the preacher's arm was relaxed. His would-be assailant had all he could do to protect himself from instant strangulation. The promptness of the Abolitionist's son alarmed the rioters, at the same time it had made lions of the most cowardly adherents of the church party.

A scene of great excitement ensued. There was shuffling of feet, scores of uplifted arms, hissing of oaths, and the dull, heavy sound of sledge-hammer blows. The vast crowd swayed like the tops of pine trees in a gale of wind.

"Down with him! Kill him! Strangle the wretch!" was heard on every hand. In a minute the doughty chief was deserted. His affrighted followers, panic-stricken, sought the cover of the woods, while he himself was writhing in the clutches of the young farmer. With his hard hand at his throat, Tom Burton was choking the breath out of him, and no one thus far had ventured to come to his rescue.

Sitting near the door of the meeting-house, intently watching the crowd in general, but the dashing young hero in particular, was a child, or rather a young girl, perhaps thirteen

years old. Her eyes had followed the handsome leader in his every movement. She seemed to be perfectly infatuated with him.

When the fracas began, and while it was in progress, many of the ladies in the church fainted away, some shrieked at the top of their lungs, and others closed their eyes and meekly folded their hands in prayer.

Not thus the little girl referred to. When she perceived the helpless condition of her hero, her solicitude knew no bounds. She sprang for the church door, leaped over the block at the entrance, slid through the dense crowd and forced her way to the spot where the struggle was taking place. In a moment she was clinging to the neck of Tom Burton, her eyes overflowing with tears.

"Oh, please, brother, do not hurt him; he will go away if you will let him. There, you have choked him enough. See, see, you will kill him!"

If Tom Burton had been struck by lightning, he would not have been more surprised. At first he tried to shake her off, but she clung to him all the closer and begged all the more piteously for the man's life.

Her conduct awakened some sympathy in the crowd.

"Let him go, Burton. He's got enough," said some one. "Yes, let him up," was the cry that went around, and Tom Burton, frowning at his sister, spurned the cringing aristocrat from him as though he were a serpent. Walsingham, still panting for breath, his beautiful curly hair tangled and dishevelled, his fine clothes torn and disarranged, and his throat red with the marks of Tom Burton's fingers, picked up his dusty slouch, and, bowing politely to the girl, retired amid the jeers of the surrounding crowd.

The minister had in the meantime reached his pulpit minus a part of his coat-tail, and mingling with sobs of emotion and hallelujahs of rejoicing over their great victory, the very roof of Burton's Meeting-house leaped to the voices of the congregation, as they sang that lofty air of thanksgiving, so old, and yet so ever new, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and the trouble was, for the time being, all over.

CHAPTER III.

PREMONITION.

PUBLIC opinion! What is, and what is it worth?

Men have a great deal to say about "a decent regard for public opinion," as though one should do nothing at all without first consulting that august censor of human conduct, when the fact is, more truth has been strangled, and more justice sacrificed at the shrine of public opinion than ever fell a victim to tyranny, or ever was immolated at the altar of ignorance and superstition.

Public opinion is "everything by turns, and nothing long," To-day it is very conservative, to-morrow extremely radical; to-day crucifying, to-morrow applauding.

Whoever knew public opinion do any pioneer work? Where has it been in the great battles of progress, which have been fought in the world? Not in the front, not on either wing of the army. It has not even *supported* the advance guard of human thought. On the other hand, it invariably puts itself in the way, blocks up the road; and not infrequently turns away from struggling Right, and makes common cause with rampant Error.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, public opinion said: "There are witches; and witches must be burned at the stake." And whosoever had the temerity to say: "There are no witches," had to be burned also. Sixty years ago it was almost death for a man to be an abolitionist even in the North. Now public opinion is just as sure that there never was such a thing on this earth as a witch, as it is sure to-day, from one end of this broad land to the other, that slavery was a fearful curse to the country, and especially to that part where it most prevailed.

Ever ready to stone the prophets, and kill them that are sent into the world to redeem it from thraldom, this public opinion slays its victims with merciless cruelty, and then turns and builds to their memory the most gorgeous mausoleums.

This same public opinion crushed out free speech in Virginia.

The little band of Northern Methodists were throttled as a fowler does his game.

The old meeting-house was burned down, and its sacred site was left as bare and desolate as that of Jerusalem after the ploughshare of the Romans had furrowed its hallowed ground.

One short year after the events related in the preceding chapter and there was scarcely a man left to say, "I am a Northern Methodist."

Tom Burton went down in the crash. Treated worse than a free negro, ostracized and threatened, he gradually lost his manhood, took to drink, became really worthless, and, finally, left the country, going no one knew where and no one but his sister Mary cared. His mother had died of a broken heart, and Mary passing under the guardianship of an uncle, George Mason, was sent to a boarding-school to become the butt for ridicule and persecution there.

Thus triumphed the cause of slavery. All the better elements of society—the cultivated, the refined, and the Christianized classes—enlisting to serve under its banner, when, in 1858, the feeling against its personal enemies uniting with the dogma of State rights, arrayed itself against the general government—a target worthy of its steel; and civil strife had already been declared in the hearts of the Southern people two years before it actually broke out in the capitol at Washington.

Patriotism was turned into hate; and like men who, when they drift from the safe moorings of Christianity, pass into a condition of infidelity, so drifted this people into a condition of moral and political anarchy, fitting them for the worship of any apotheosis which in its nature might represent rebellion, and promised to perpetuate the institution peculiar to the South.

Nor had they long to wait for the coming of the imperial goddess.

In the politics of the nation, the Kansas-Nebraska altercation, the success of the proslavery party in the local elections in the former, and the daring gallantry and prestige of the Southern representation in Congress, paved the way for the *début* of Secession, and moulded into shape the chimera of a Southern Confederacy.

From the national capital, the rapidly maturing monster, like a malignant tumor, sent out its tentacles into States and communities, fermenting the whole extent of the Sunny South.

Hostile legislation found ready supporters. In Virginia every vessel trading out of the capes of the Chesapeake was

made subject to the right of search; justices of the peace were clothed with authority to enter into United States post-offices, extract certain newspapers therefrom, and make bon-fires of them in the public streets, and the militia of the State was mobilized and put upon a war footing.

Such had grown the condition of things when, in the course of time, the Fourth of July, in the year aforesaid, dawned upon a country full of intestine strife and tottering to an epoch at once the most deplorable, and, at the same time, the most glorious in the annals of the world.

When it did come it found the people of Virginia less inclined to celebrate it than ever before, if, indeed, they cared to celebrate it in the old-fashioned way at all. But as some of the young people desired to have an opportunity to enjoy a little holiday, to exchange glances, and talk of other things than corn and oats, and as one Hall, a school-master, who was teaching a military school in the neighborhood, wished to show off his boys in their summer uniforms, it was determined to repair to a certain bluff on the bay shore, known as Buzzard Hill (there is nothing in a name), and then and there hold a Fourth of July picnic.

Ten days previous to this affair, Claude Walsingham, who had lately been called to the bar, sat in his office at Drummondtown, the county seat, reading a ponderous law volume at his leisure. Drummondtown, at that day and date, was a finished village. Not finished in the classic sense of the word, but finished in its growth. The limits of the town were as fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians, nobody wishing to build any more houses, and nobody wishing any one else to come there and build any. The court-house was there built at some period in the last century, the clerk's office, a tavern, some three churches, and about two score private residences. It is all changed now. The iconoclastic steam engine has found its way down the middle of the old Eastern shore, and Drummondtown has awakened out of its long sleep, yawned, and gone to work. But the place is not as aristocratic as it used to be, because the free school system has been introduced, and the Chincotiaguers and Tangier Islanders and the White Marshers have been taught to read and write, and to know something else besides oysters and ponies and sand hills; and for bright eyes and quick intellects, and good manners, as well as good living, one would not go now specially to the court-house to find them.

But this is neither here nor there. Claude Walsingham was sitting in his office, and this was in the corner

of the old court-yard, reading as aforesaid, that is, he had been, for he was asleep now, sitting bolt upright in a large arm-chair, with a table in front of him covered with green baize on which was laid ample writing material, fancy penwipers and some few pamphlets. Behind him, ranged on shelves from floor to ceiling, were long rows of books with leather backs, some old and some new. Growing by the window was a luxurious willow, which drooped its modest branches over the low roof of his study. Some tall elms stood in front of his door in the court-yard, in one of which a pair of orioles were leisurely feeding their young. The day was very hot. The locust trilled his shrill notes, sighing away drowsily as the day advanced toward noon. Altogether, the scene was soothing and quiet, suited to both place and people. It is no wonder that Claude was lazy and went to sleep. The liveliest Yankee this side of Canada would be as lazy in less than six months in that latitude. Neither is it any wonder that he let his heavy book fall to the floor; but, it is a wonder that the quick, sharp howl of the red setter that was also dozing at his feet, whose tail had sustained the momentum of the mighty volume, did not cause him to start.

How long he would have slept is an unknown fact, had not another young sprig of the law sauntered across the court-house yard, and stood in the door of the office fully a minute before exclaiming:

"Well, you're a pretty picture, sitting there asleep with your mouth wide open, and the flies playing hide-and-seek in and out of it."

Claude yawned, cleared his throat, and merely said, "Hello, old fellow. Come in."

"With the Fourth of July not two weeks off, I should think all young lawyers who expect to air themselves on that occasion, instead of wasting precious time in sleep, would be preparing their addresses. Were I the lucky orator, I know I should," and saying this the visitor walked in, took a seat, and began to fan himself with his straw hat.

"Who told you I was going to make a speech, Fred?"

"Oh, I heard you were."

"Nonsense. Let me tell you a thing or two. If you cared as little for the Fourth of July or its memories as I do, you would sleep too. I always despised spread-eagle occasions anyway, you know; and who has any heart in things national now? My dear boy, the State is every thing. Do you not know, that the worst thing which ever befell this country,

was the separation from the mother country? Before God, I had rather be under British rule ten times over, than such a government as we shall have in America in a few years. All this outcry about independence now, and independence forever—this give me liberty, or give me death sentiment—is nothing but downright bosh. We have too much liberty already, and—"

"You're a devil of a fellow to be selected to deliver a Fourth of July oration, now ar'n't you?"

"I do not understand you, I shall deliver no oration that I know of."

"Perhaps you'll change your mind in a little while. But, how is this? Have you indeed no patriotism at all? Do not the names of Washington and Jefferson and Henry, stir within you the old feeling? Does the starry flag, as it flutters in the breeze, awaken in your obdurate breast no national enthusiasm, is it possible that you are the man without a country?

'Lives there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?'"

"Jerusalem! old fellow; you roar like a Demosthenes. But seriously, our government is nothing. It is all going to pieces. It will cease to exist in less than ten years. I should not be surprised to see a Southern confederacy in less than five."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that we shall have a divided country, and that right soon. We have got to cut loose from that transcendental free-love-puritanical-canting set of negro-loving scoundrels at the North, or else become their slaves. As for me—"

"Hold up, Walsingham, here comes a delegation of ladies across the yard They have been scouring the town in quest of you for the last half-hour. I came in to tell you, but forgot it. I'm going to take leg-bail through the back door. So good-bye."

"For God's sake, why did you not tell me before!" exclaimed Walsingham excitedly, jumping to his feet and running into his coat with a precipitancy something akin to the performance of a clown in a circus. This done he made haste to arrange his clustering brown ringlets, but the attempt failed.

The fair clients were upon him.

There were four of them. Two of them he recognized at a glance. One of these was a governess, a Philadelphia lady,

who had charge of the most respectable boarding-school in the country; a thick-set blondish woman of thirty-five, rather plain featured, with a kind of Queen Victoria physique. The other was a Miss Moore, a fair and beautiful blonde, tall, graceful, and captivating, with eyes extremely large and full, and a wealth of brown hair which seemed to ripple in wavelets about a rather prominent forehead. Of the other two the first was a Miss Savage, a young lady rather stout, and of phlegmatic temperament, with no pretense to beauty or style.

The fourth and last was a young girl probably of seventeen summers, small in stature, dark in complexion, retiring in manner, but very handsome. Her dark eyes were pensive rather that brilliant, her forehead narrow, brows arching, nose slightly acquiline with lips just thick enough when closed to form an aurelean bow as perfect as that of the god of love, and as prognostic of darts as the quiver he wears at his back. She was presented to his lawyership as Miss Mary Burton. Walsingham bowed an acknowledgment of the honor, grew slighty red and remarked:

"I believe we have had the pleasure of meeting before."

"I have every reason to think as much, myself," replied the young lady. "I was a child then, though," she added with a slight show of embarrassment.

"Indeed, I have been your debtor ever since. And now, without any desire to recall the unpleasant circumstance, do wish to discharge that obligation as far as words are capable of so doing," continued Walsingham, growing more at ease in his manner.

Miss Burton blushed in spite of herself. But forcing a smile she replied: "Really I do not feel that you owe me any thing. I was always a very foolish child, head-strong and impulsive. You know young people often do foolish things."

"Then if I understand, you mean to say that you would not act in the same manner under similar circumstances?"

"Well, I should think not, sir. Of course, I would not. What might be pardoned then as a childish freak would make me appear in a very ridiculous light now, Mr. Walsingham."

"Then, I think, it's a great pity some people ever get to be grown up. If I should ever need your services again, I am sure I should wish such a child within the sound of my cries for help," he said, teasing her. "But those old days are past, Miss Burton, and we'll let them rest."

During this conversation all the ladies, especially Miss

Blake, the governess, evinced an impatience they very indifferently concealed. The latter had put up her mouth to speak at least twenty times, but finding she could not get in at the right place, she turned the battery of her eyes upon her offending pupil with good effect, and finally addressed herself to the young lawyer.

"You are aware, Mr. Walsingham, we are going to have a celebration of the Fourth at Buzzard Hill?"

"So I have just heard a moment ago."

"And we are a committee sent from the ladies' picnic club to tender you an invitation to speak for us on that occasion."

"You do me a very great honor, Miss Blake, and I desire that you convey my appreciation of the same to the club, but, really, I must beg to be excused."

"Oh, please, do not decline," put in two or three ladies at the same time.

Miss Burton had turned her face away from the others. She appeared to be inspecting the law literature in the bookcase.

"Now, Mr. Walsingham, you don't say that you will disappoint us after we have selected you in preference to any other of the young lawyers in Drummondtown, and have come all this long way to invite you. We shall regard it very unkind in you to deny us."

Mr. Walsingham held his head slightly to one side, and in a half reflective mood replied to the last onslaught.

"I am sure I do not know what else to say."

"You can say yes," said languid Miss Savage, with an effort.

"And I am sure he could if he would," put in Miss Moore, modestly.

Now, Mr. Claude was an acknowledged ladies' man, and he disliked to refuse any reasonable request they might make of him. So, while there was something in a Fourth of July oration that was exceedingly disgusting, he began to take the offer into serious consideration.

The Northern brogue of Miss Blake, it must be said, did not help her cause any. All the time she was urging her case, her bold manners and flippant conversation were telling against it. Not that she, poor thing, had anything at all to do with politics or the negro question; nothing was further from her designs. She would have married the greatest rebel in the South, with a whole plantation of slaves, if she could have done so; but she was a Northern woman, and her

accent bored Claude. But, on the other side of the question, there were advantages not to be overlooked.

Many of the richest and best families in the county were represented in Miss Blake's school.

To decline was to disdain a distinguished honor. It was to lose an opportunity to display his oratorical talents which did not present itself every day. If there were not millions in it, there certainly might grow hundreds out of it. It was a small matter for him to reconsider his hasty refusal.

"All of you ladies have had something to say about this matter but Miss Burton. Has my little protector no plea to urge?" saying which he turned toward the young lady, who was still absorbed in reading the titles of the law books.

"Oh never mind me," she replied; "I represent the minority."

"It is to be a grand affair," continued Miss Blake; talking as rapidly as a mill-wheel turns, treading every step upon the sensitive Southern nerves of her listener's auditory organs with her short *o's* and her French *u's*. Not so much a celebration in the Northern sense of the word as a real good time, with fried chicken, new potatoes, June apple-pies, and pretty girls *ad libitum*."

"It must be admitted, Miss Blake, that you present your case with the sagacity of an accomplished lawyer. You appeal to the asthetic as well as the physical man, and completely cover the ground with your sweeping argument."

"I, for one, do not see how you do stand it," said weary Miss Savage in her most whining tones, as she fanned herself with a sort of summer-day air.

"Well, let us hear from the minority now," said Claude, again turning upon Miss Burton.

"She says, of course, just what we all say that you cannot decently get out of it. So that's all there is to it," said the school-mistress, speaking for her pupil.

"Well, well, I suppose if Miss Burton will take as good care of me as she did on a former occasion I will agree to accommodate you, ladies," he said teasingly.

Miss Blake was provoked at his constant allusion to what she did not understand, and wanted to know what it was about.

"Oh never mind that," replied Claude; "it is a little secret between Miss Burton and myself."

Miss Moore grew a trifle uneasy at this remark, and every body seemed ill at ease but Claude, who evidently enjoyed the scene. Miss Burton proceeded:

"I promise you, I will not attempt to play in such a *rôle* as on a former occasion, Mr. Walsingham; and if you are so unfortunate as to fall into the bay on the Fourth of July, or get into any other sort of scrape, you will have to depend upon some of these other ladies to pull you out. They are stronger than I am, and can do you better service."

Everybody laughed at this sally, except Miss Moore, who maintained a dignified composure.

"Then we shall take back a favorable reply, shall we not?" said Miss Blake.

"Yes, I suppose you may. But you must not expect too much. Remember I am no Fourth of July orator.

"Let that be our look-out," was Miss Blake's reply.

"By Heavens! what a little beauty that Miss Mary has grown to be. What a pity she is a Burton. I could love her in a minute," ejaculated Claude after the ladies had retired, as he threw himself into his easy chair again, not to sleep this time, for it was nearly noon, and his appetite began to warn him that in a few minutes the tavern bell would summon him to dinner.

The two weeks intervening passed away very quickly, and the booming of cannon in the morning awoke the children of the peninsula that day much earlier than usual. They had doubtless been dreaming of the holiday, not of fire-crackers and bombs and sky-rockets, for they knew nothing about these things, happy urchins; but their heads were full of Buzzard Hills, and picnics, and a good time generally along the bay shore. They woke suddenly and joyously at the boom of the deep-toned guns at Fortress Monroe, thirty or forty miles away. There were some grown people whose morning nap was cut short by the same cause; for although it was oat harvest, the weary plodders of the farm had agreed to take a day's rest, and were sleeping late that summer morning.

Great anticipations possessed the minds of all classes.

To the hard-worked plough-boy who had been fed for the last four months on fried bacon and corn bread, with meal mush and black molasses for dessert, there appeared visions of long tables groaning under the weight of the most palatable viands, such as roast lamb and pig, boiled and fried chicken, and pies, and tarts without number, with frozen custard at ten cents a glass. (They measured their ice cream in wine glasses.)

To the half-grown youngsters raised in the high-woods (the middle ground of the peninsula), the bay with its vast

and sparkling sheet of water glistening in the sunshine, the sight of crabs crawling, and fish disporting themselves in its limpid depths, the privilege to wade with trousers tucked up above the knees—this was sufficient for them.

But to the mind of the young fellow whose change of voice had come over him, and whose upper lip began to look downy—he whose inward being had been touched by the influence of the spring just gone by as the sapling had been touched in the grove, there was in his mind nothing else but fairy-like creatures clad in cambric, spotless and white, even to their stockings, the odor of wild flowers, the smell of acanthus and heliotrope.

And what was on Claude's mind?—A crowd of listening people, rapt and spell-bound, as they listened to the impassioned words of an orator about his size, the approving smiles of women, with one small dark-eyed girl standing afar off, in careless attitude, but cognizant of all that was going on!

But why go on to paint an imaginary picture when a short ride from the interior of the county will take us to the very spot, and we can observe the whole scene as it actually occurred.

As we approach the bluff, driving down through a delightfully shaded woods road, where the scent of cedar and myrtle fills the soft air, and the cooing of the turtle doves are forever reminding us of the first lines of Byron's "Bride of Abydos," suddenly, as we leave the forest, a magnificent view bursts upon our vision.

The great Chesapeake, apparently as boundless, but less boisterous, than the Atlantic, is spread out before us glittering and shimmering, until it fades away into the purple and gray horizon.

Rolling hills of sand, snow-white, stretch along the shore, contrasting finely with the dark-green foliage of the background.

We find this much mentioned Buzzard Hill to be a low promontory jutting out into the bay, connected with the mainland by a narrow neck of land, but containing in itself several acres of ground, plentifully supplied with shade trees, We approach it, and observe on the bluff the white tops of some camp-meeting tents, awnings, etc. A throng of country people, of all sorts and sizes, are already assembled, conspicuous among whom are fifty or sixty youths in brand-new cadet uniforms. Their preceptor is there also, wearing the shoulder straps of a captain. A flag is floating from a staff in the center of the

grounds. It waves fretfully, as if teased by the inconstant west wind which flares up now and then with a will, only to die away again to a mere breath. The day is very hot. Along the shore the unhitched vehicles look like black beetles that have crawled up out of the water, to dry themselves in the sun.

A cannon—a twelve-pounder—has been hauled down to the outer edge of the bluff overlooking the coast. It has been unlimbered by the cadets, and is ready for action.

It is an old Revolutionary piece, has the appearance of great age, and evidently has a history of its own. We draw nearer and perceive that men are busy laying tables, and women spreading cloth thereon. Our visionary lads from the high woods are already carousing in the water, some of their apparel past condition for ironing.

Pairs of lovers carelessly saunter along the shore, occupy buggies, or sit under the live oaks. Not many under the oaks, there is too much company there. The busy governess is flying around superintending everything, and anxious that all shall be done "a la Phil'delphia."

The noon hour draws nigh.

Mr. Claude has arrived, and is gallanting Miss Moore.

Mary Burton is there also, walking along the beach, casting pebbles into the bay, or sitting down on the grass, with her pretty little feet dangling over the side of the steep bank. She is moody and reflective, her attention directed to a white sail becalmed in the distance, thinking, perhaps, of her brother Tom, for she wipes away a tear. She wonders where he is gone, and if he ever will reform and come back to the Eastern shore again. "God bless and preserve him, wherever he may be," she mentally ejaculates. She thinks how lively he used to be; of his sorrows and his wrongs; of the old meeting-house, and her honest, pious parents whom she will never see again.

She thinks of something else, when Claude Walsingham passes by at a short distance with Miss Moore leaning on his arm. "They must be lovers," she says. "I wonder if they will ever be married?" But even while she is putting this question to herself she does not notice that he has led the young lady to a seat, and, leaving her, is approaching in her direction, until she hears his footsteps and looks up.

How suddenly the circulation of her blood is increased. There is no appreciable cause for it, but her heart flies away with itself, and jumps up and down as if it will choke her.

The young lawyer salutes her; and as he lifts his hat the wind toys with his brown locks.

"What a selfish way you have of treating us all, Miss Mary," are his first words. "You keep off here to yourself and court solitude with the avidity of a hermit, Pray what can be done to amuse you?"

"What reason have you, Mr. Walsingham, to assume that I am not sufficiently amused?" she replies in a tone a little more severe than she intended.

"I trust nothing has gone wrong with you, I should be sorry to know you were ill on this gala day, Miss Burton," he rejoins."

"Oh, I am very well, thank you. I am happier when alone; that, is outside of a crowd. I dislike crowds." She evidently tries to speak more cheerfully. "Changing the subject, Mr. Orator, when do you hold forth?"

"The time is fixed, I think, at half-past eleven. I heartily wish it was over."

"Do you really dislike to speak?"

"It is to me a great cross, as you Methodist people sometimes say in your class meetings."

"You lawyers should not mind speaking, I am sure you have enough of it to do."

"True, but that is a different thing to this business. In the court-house we talk for money, and seldom have any ladies present."

"Does it embarrass you so to speak before ladies? Let me assure you they are less critical than men. Flatter them a little and you'll soon gain their applause."

"I can't say as much as that; but I do honestly believe that ladies, as a general thing, forget and forgive much more readily than men."

"But sometimes remember what we ought in justice to ourselves to forget." She blurted out unthinkingly as she cast her eyes over the bay.

"Will you hear me speak to-day?"

"Of course I will. Why not?"

"Oh, nothing, I supposed you too disinterested." There was a short pause. "After the exercises at the stand the cadets are to fire minute guns," he went on. "Alas! they are learning the art of war full soon. I fear they will need all the knowledge they can acquire in that line long before they are grown. You, I believe, Miss Mary, do not take much interest in politics?"

"No. To one who has suffered as I have, on account of such matters, that subject has nothing for me but pain."

"You are right, Miss Mary, very right, and I was wrong

to speak of it. But in view of the past, and the prospects of the future will you not allow me to be your friend?"

"I thank you, sir, for your kindness; but a friendless girl above all others should never show herself a mendicant for friendship, if thereby she is likely in the least to incur the smallest obligation." She is not looking him in the face, now. Her eyes are bent upon the ground.

"That, then, is why you prefer to wander off here alone, I presume."

"Partly so."

"Then it ought to be gratifying to you to have foolish people like me follow you out into your desert places, eh?"

"A woman is always gratified when her plans succeed," was her quiet repartee.

He is about to go on when she interrupts him.

"See, they are moving toward the stand now, and some one is calling you."

"Will you go up with me?"

"No, thank you. Go on, I will follow alone.

She proceeds at her leisure taking time to ask herself what there is in Claude Walsingham's manner or person that makes him appear to her unlike any other man. What spell does he possess more than others to make her feel to-day that if the instincts of womanly modesty were not present with her, she would, on a like occasion do just as she did at Burton's meeting house?

She cannot solve the problem.

A gulf as wide as Acheron and as impassible as the river of Styx divided them. He was a patrician of the patricians, a Bourbon of the Bourbons. She, the daughter of a plebeian and an abolitionist.

Her pride rebels. She ridicules and contemns her soft-heartedness, and she goes on.

The people gather in front, behind and on all sides of the speaker's stand. The cadets stand in line on the right, Captain Hall mounts the steps, comes to the front of the rostrum and in a few brief words introduces the orator of the day.

Then Claude begins. He is slightly embarrassed at first, at least appears to be sufficiently so to gain the sympathy of his audience, but as soon as they seem to be disgusted that he does not proceed in a more interesting manner, he slowly begins to open up his theme, as an organist pulling out his stops, until not one in that vast crowd has any more fear about their speaker's ability, or that he has power in reserve to gratify all their rhetorical longings.

With his profuse locks gently lifted by the soft summer breeze, his manly form growing taller as he rises to grand and unlooked-for flights of eloquence—his gesticulation perfect his finely formed hand, not widely extended, but sufficiently unclasped to show its ample palm, giving to his sweeping gesture the twofold power of husbanded resources on the one hand, and generous impulses on the other, he carries his hearers along with him from topic to topic, striding here and there along the perilous peaks of oratory, or poising on some beetling crag as overawing as the spectre of the Brocken. And then, venturing to reach some toppling summit like a daring Alpine hunter, filling all the people with dread of his doubtful situation and bold attempt, and ere they have time to think astonishing them by a leap so grand, that they hold their breath, assuring even those whose envy he may have excited that he has the ability to walk anywhere and everywhere—as he does all this, the hearts of the multitudes well up into their throats and the very bluff trembles with applause.

We listen and are compelled to admit that whatever of calm dignity there may be in the speeches of Northern men, there is something in a Virginia orator that smacks of the ancients and carries us back to the grand old days of Demosthenes and Cicero in the Acropolis and the Roman Forum.

But alas and alack for such eloquence when it is used to lead men astray! when it plucks out the eyes of Truth and tampers with the scales of Justice!

Here on this great day, than one more precious to the world it were hard to find—here, under the drooping banner, the pride and glory of the grandest Republic, the sons of men have been permitted to gaze upon, here upon an atmosphere made ambrosial by the breath of America's greatest heroes, rang out even then the poisoned venom of rebellion which found an ear as eager to listen as that of Eve when Satan wooed her heart away from Eden's lovely bowers.

It was such eloquence as this, reader, which was destined to change our heaven of peace to a apndemonium of discord, and for four sad years to send red ruin forth to prey upon a devoted land.

No wonder that from the time he begins to speak of breaking asunder the Union of the States, the air grows murky, a dark cloud gathers in the far west, and sullen thunder mutters back a solemn and impressive protest as the shouts of a crazed and deluded people float over the sleeping bay.

Mary Burton had sauntered up to the place of all attrac-

tion, and quietly taken her seat within easy hearing of the impassioned speaker. At first she is not greatly moved. She knows very well the sentiments and temper of the orator, and she makes up her mind to be only a passive listener.

But as the people begin to cheer and the speaker, himself, catching the inspiration of his own genius rises to the proportion of Apollo himself, the old feelings come back and she longs to rush forward and throw herself at his feet as before a god. She trembles, and before she is aware of it, is weeping. What he says after that she knows not. All is confusion; and time goes by unmeasured.

The breaking up of the audience raises a deafening outburst of applause that reluctantly subsides, and the quick sharp voice of Captain Hall speaking to his cadets arouses her to full consciousness. The boys move off in fine style. The crowd follows.

Mary looks around like one awakened out of sleep.

Where was Claude? She does not see him. She dare not inquire; and yet a strange feeling comes over her that she must find him. She starts after the crowd. She has not proceeded far before she is shocked by the intonations of a great sound which shakes the ground under her feet and enshrouds the bluff in a thick volume of sulphurous smoke, which almost stifles her.

An unspeakable dread of some impending calamity seizes her.

She has but one thought. Where is Claude? She cannot contain herself. Pale as death she runs forward into the thickest of the crowd. By the time she reaches the place where the firing is taking place, another and still another explosion has shaken bay and bluff, and the well trained cadets are swabbing the gun for another charge.

This time they succeed but imperfectly. They are growing weary. The boy at the vent has a look of agony on his face. The piece is hot and burns his thumb.

They insert the cartridge and press the ramrod into the gun's muzzle to force it home; but it will not go.

Claude Walsingham, his face still flushed with the glow of a great victory, is standing by the side of Miss Moore.

She suggests, "Can you not help the boys?" Certainly he can. He sprirgs toward the muzzle of the gun, but he does not reach it; with a look as wild as that of a maniac Mary Burton rushes between him and it, her white muslin dress smoking from contact with the heated metal. She clutches

his arm imploringly. He steps back, looks into her face and frowns. A murmur of disapprobation runs through the bystanders. Immediately, Captain Hall forcing back the boys, seizes the stick on one side and a farmer's lad the other and they drive the cartridge home. The unprotected finger of the boy is raised from the vent and the very ground seems to suddenly recede from beneath the feet of the multitude. The whole place is covered with a pall of smoke. It lifts a little. Mary is still clutching the arm of Claude. They are both white as corpses now. There is a slight stir among the people which increases to a panic. Something has happened.

There is an odor of charred human flesh and burning rags. Men look hurriedly here and there. From the cannon's mouth to the verge of the bluff lie shreds of something which resembles clothing. "It is the wadding," say some. But what is that beyond? "A human arm! Great God!" Two men are blown into atoms. The old gun which had belched forth death to tyranny at Yorktown had gagged at the touch of treason!

All this time the cloud has been rising. Its lurid outlines stretch from north to south, the whole extent of the western shore, and now it strikes the bay. Its whirling nimbus almost sweeps the water. An eygre soars white-crested before it. A blinding flash of lightning wraps the bluff in flame, and the tornado is upon the picnickers. Consternation ensues. The spread tables are overturned. Horses, wild with terror, run up and down the bay shore, neighing piteously. Mothers scream frantically for their lost children. There is a stampede for home. Nature revolts at the blasphemy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SPY.

REMOVED by the space of thirty years from the stirring scenes of those rebellious days, how amazing it is to contemplate the rapidity with which their events followed each other, culminating at last in the war. Indeed, the period, in its connections with the past history of the country, formed one of the grandest chimeras the world has ever seen. The gradations of that wonderful impulse from the Fanueil Hall fracas, the day on which Wendell Phillips, with

a faith as steadfast as that of Israel's ancient law-giver, chose, like him, to suffer affliction with the people of God than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, were as momentous and as rapid in their course as a tidal wave, which, rising in the far-off depths of ocean and moving coastward, gathering force and speed along its way, bursts at last in awful grandeur upon the shore.

Everything was ripe for the *coup de état.* The raid of Old Ossawattomie was the straw that broke the camel's back. The firing upon the "Star of the West" in Charleston Harbor was a natural consequence.

With a spontaniety worthy of a better cause, and really giving to the general uprising a superficial appearance of justness as well as necessity, such as characterized the revolutionary movement of '76, the people of the Southern States flew to arms.

There was, of course, some division of sentiment on the border; but in the heart of the Confederacy there was either no Unionism or it was crushed out immediately.

The county of Accomack was the home of the "fiery Wise." You might have counted all the Union men in that county on the tips of your fingers.

Mary Burton's guardian and uncle, George Mason, was one of these. Though persecuted, despised, and counted worse than a felon, he never gave up his allegiance to the Constitution and the flag. No promises on the one hand nor threats on the other affected him. Nor was there one particle of selfishness in his patriotism. It was not to increase his wealth, for not only his property, but his life, was in danger. It was not for notoriety, for no man was more modest and retiring. Friends he had none, except it might have been colored people. When visiting other people's houses on business he was not allowed to approach the great house. In bad weather he was sent on such occasions to the kitchen. As a natural consequence his family suffered with him. No one visited them. No one invited them out. They were relegated to the domain of isolation. Was a member of the household ill, no neighbor came to assist or offer consolation. The footstep of a friendly visitor never crossed his threshold. The kindly face of a neighbor never even looked over his fence. He was sneered at on the highway, and spat upon. Ladies turned their backs upon him when they met him in the streets of the neighboring village, and drew aside their skirts when they came in contact with his wife at church. Parents taught their children to hoot,

to cast stones and rotten eggs at him, and to kill his live stock wherever found.

Of course Mary did not escape. She was soon forced out of school and cast out of society, just as a gardener plucks up a noxious weed and casts it out into the ditch.

Farmers who owned places next to his sold their farms, or moved away and suffered them to grow up into brambles. The whole neighborhood suffered a blight. The sin of Unionism, like the sin of our first parents, tainted even the earth.

Did Mr. Mason feel it, did you ask? Was he a stone? Was the epidermis of an Abolitionist so thick that such keen and cruel thrusts could not pierce it?

Of course he felt it. Of course it was hard for him to hold his head up when he went out into the village; of course he walked nervously and had a downcast look about him.

Did he look careworn and sallow? Could he look otherwise, when his children pined at home; when his wife, industrious and patient as she was, found herself cut off from all intercourse with society, and her daughters treated as if they had been harlots? People said he looked bad because he was a bad man, and that all Abolitionists were white-livered.

The government has pensioned its soldiers, built homes for those who are alive and raised monuments to the memory of those who are dead; but for those who suffered for her as no man ever suffered on the battle-field, she has not even a good word. The last man to attain an office in the United States to-day is the consistent, original Union man of the South. Well may it be said, Republics are ungrateful.

The John Brown raid took place in 1859; the State called her convention in 1860. In the year last named the war-spirit was rampant on the Eastern shore. Ten infantry and two cavalry companies were formed on its peninsula. Of one of the latter, Claude Walsingham was elected captain. As the war fever rose higher and higher and the contest had begun beyond recall, martial law was declared and men and property made tributary to demands of the military authority. Considered as an enemy, the property of Mr. Mason was seized, until scarcely enough was left for him to subsist on. His horses, cattle, grain and fodder were confiscated without mercy. His pleasant farm, called Whitemarsh, was stript of every thing. Starvation stared his family in the face; diphtheria broke out in his household, and all were stricken down except himself and wife and Mary Burton. Improper food and lack of proper nursing swept them all off, save a

little boy six years old. Three were buried in one day by the afflicted father and an old negro man. To make it more unpleasant, his premises were under constant espionage, and one night, a negro, being intercepted in the act of taking him some little article of food, he was arrested upon the charge of receiving stolen goods and lodged in the county jail. Mrs. Mason, now doubly bereaved, became herself almost a helpless invalid. This placed a heavy responsibility upon the shoulders of Mary, who was left, with the aid of an old negro woman, sole manager and provider for the little household.

In this onerous position she lived without help and without sympathy. Her lady friends had long since forsaken her. Claude Walsingham sometimes came within sight of the house, but it was only to forage in the fields or the barnyard.

Once he did write her a note, saying he was sorry that events had transpired which made it impossible for him to maintain the intimacy which had been so pleasantly begun. That by and by, after the present state of things passed by, it might be different. That he was not insensible to the fact that she had saved his life, and that he should remember her with the deepest feelings of gratitude as long as he lived. And but for her associations the ties of their friendship should never have been broken. As it was he could neither visit her nor be seen in her company. It would compromise him not only socially—for that matter he did not care what people said—but cause him to be unjustly suspected by his superiors in the army. He regretted that a gulf so wide should lie between two people whose lives, outside of politics and religion, might have found, in a closer union than that of friendship the only true road to happiness. So he spoke in his note. To many girls placed in Mary's situation such words would have been regarded as insulting, or as uttered in tones of evident mockery. But not so with her. She found an excuse for his conduct in his argument. It could not be expected that he should associate with the family of George Mason. She would not even so disgrace him if she had the power. "It was utterly wrong in me, the daughter of a despised emancipationist, to ever entertain the idea of having a friend in Claude Walsingham," and saying this, she laid the note down and was silent.

There was enough in her daily duties to engage her attention, and she tried to think no more of Claude or the future.

It came to be the summer of 1861, and there was no longer any hope for peace until one side or the other of the combat-

ants was conquered. As the autumn approached dangers thick and fast began to assail the sea-girt peninsula. Between the Federal gunboats—which found an easy ingress to almost any part of the two counties, by steaming up the many navigable creeks in both sea and bay coast—and the army of Brigadier General Lockwood in Maryland, there was no rest for the little army of native troops. Invasions were not only hourly expected, but of daily occurrence, and to guard a coast-line so extensive was impossible with so small a force.

October came in all its mellowness of rich maturity, but still the handful of Confederates held out, and the military *statu quo* was preserved intact from the line of Maryland on the north to the point of Northampton on the south.

At Mr Mason's there was no change, except that the health of his wife had slightly improved, and, with the husband in jail and the troops having been removed to a point near the border, there was comparative quiet at Whitemarsh.

Mary was the woman of all work, inside and out, and one evening, just after sunset, took the little George and went down through the field to the thicket fence to feed some pigs, which, by some lucky chance, had not fallen into the hands of the soldiers or been stolen by the negroes.

"We are not so badly off, after all," she said to herself, as she wended her way with a basket of shelled corn on one arm, and the little boy toddling on the other side. "Men may fight, but the world of nature is as peaceful and as soul-sustaining as ever." And so she came to the fence at the back of the farm, down through the cornfield she passed, the corn all ungarnered and trampled down and overridden by army wagons and cavalry horses. The western sky was aglow with day's departing splendors, and the shadows were creeping silently through the woods. As they reached the wood's gate, a squirrel late returning to his nest ran by chattering as he went, his long bushy tail and cunning looks affording much diversion to the little boy. On the outside of the gate was the pig-pen, and through an opening between the logs of this, the shoats, six in number, crept to receive the corn which Mary cast into it, the mother receiving her portion on the outside.

The little boy had climbed up in the pen and was intently engaged in looking at them crack the yellow grain, and Mary was standing on the opposite side, apparently as much amused, when, suddenly, from the depths of the dark forest a man was seen approaching. His step was cautious and his

manner circumspect. He was attired in a long dark-colored overcoat, wore a soldier's cap and the heavy boots and spurs of a horseman. The child had seen and heard enough of soldiers to be frightened at any stranger, and dropping himself to the ground he ran around to the other side of the pen and clutched his older cousin by the hand, beginning to cry.

Mary was frightened and would have made her escape, but it was not possible, the man was too near, and to fly with the weight of the child in her arms was folly, should the stranger happen to have any evil designs toward her. The intruder came up to within saluting distance and halted. Mary now saw that he wore his beard long, and the visor of his cap pulled well down over his face; but for all that, there was an expression of friendliness in his features which went far to reassure her.

"You do not seem to know me," he said, smiling faintly. "But I know you, and you need not be afraid. I do not intend to harm you or the child."

There was a strange familiarity in the voice that awakened in the girl a premonition of some great surprise, but jump to a correct conclusion as to from what quarter it was coming, she could not, for her life.

Then the stranger came nearer, and in sadder tones said:

"You ought to know me, Mary; I am your brother, Tom Burton."

Child, every thing, for the moment, was forgotten, as she fell into his arms and sobbed and wept her very soul out for joy.

"And mother, Mary?"

"Is dead, Tom. Sorrow for you and trouble over other things killed her."

"Yes, yes, I understand it all. I feared they would kill you too, Mary, and I have risked everything to see you."

"I am so glad you have come home, brother, but why are you dressed in soldier's clothes?"

"I have been a soldier for several years, Mary. I enlisted as a private before the war, I am a colonel, now."

"In what army?" inquired the girl with a look of anxiety in her face.

"In what army do you suppose, girl?" and opening his overcoat, he displayed an officer's uniform on which were the trimmings of the United States army.

Mary staggered back in painful astonishment, exclaiming:

"I am so sorry, so sorry!"

Colonel Tom Burton laughed outright. "And what is your objection, sister, to this uniform ?

"Oh brother, we have suffered so much ! " was all she could say.

"Come, come, let us journey toward the house. We can talk as we go," and saying this he took the child in his arms and they went through the gate into the field.

"I did not want to see you a soldier, any way. I was in hopes you had come home to stay with us. Besides, they will kill you now. I am so sorry. But you have grown heavier, Tom, and I know you don't drink now," she said as she watched his firm step and steady gait.

"No, Mary, I am a man at last; and only live to see our family righted."

"But, my dear brother, you can never gain your point in that uniform. You will only bring upon us still deeper ignominy and shame."

"Think not so, my darling. In this same dress I shall triumph over our foes and vindicate the name of our family."

Mary was still in doubt and darkness so far as being able to coincide with her brother's views. It was in vain he tried to convince her he was on the right side. A thousand times had she rather seen him a Confederate private than a Union colonel.

"What can you hope to gain by being a Union soldier? Even should the Federal Government succeed in putting down the rebellion, these people who hate us will never look upon us again with favor, and having a new excuse, we shall suffer over again what we have already experienced even to a much more grievous extent. You will never be able to live at home, and feeling their unmerciful ostracism in your sensitive heart, you will go back again to the bad."

"Never fear, my good sister, I am safe now. I am protected by a power superior to all their devilish machinations. They may kill me in battle, but can never touch my honor. Living or dying I shall hereafter be respected, because the life I lead shall merit it, and the sword I wear shall enforce it. I have at last got my enemies and yours where I can push them to the wall, and reap my sweet revenge."

They reached the house. Mrs Mason was rejoiced to see her nephew.

"But, Aunt Mollie, he is in the Union army ! "

"And just where he ought to be, child," replied the old woman. "How it would rejoice George's heart to see him."

"And you say they've got uncle in the jail? Rest assured, dear aunt, they will not keep him there long. You will soon have him restored to you again, never to be separated until death. Just over the line of the county we have five thousand troops, and in a few days shall be down here and set things to rights once for all."

"But, my brother, when it's all over, what then?"

"Then, my sister, will those who have persecuted us be dead or silent."

"Alas! I fear it will never be in your day or mine," said Mary, sighing.

"Do you think there will be a battle?" she inquires as they sat at the supper table.

"That depends. General Dix has issued a proclamation calling upon the people to lay down their arms and return to their allegiance. We are now only waiting to see what they will do. If they attempt to fight us the whole country will perish."

Mary shuddered at the thought, and Claude was foremost in her mind. "But are you not afraid they may find you here? Oh, if they did"—

The thought of her brother's danger had not occurred to her before, and the pallor of her face testified to her anxiety. No one knew the temper of the Confederate troops in regard to their watchfulness and hatred of even those who sympathized with the Union cause better than the two lone women at Whitemarsh, and fearing death or some worse fate if the young officer should be discovered and captured there, they both began to be alarmed. In any event there would be no mercy shown to him.

"I know I risk a great deal; but, being so near you, I could not resist the desire to see you both and know what was going on. I will remain with you only a part of the night, taking a short nap, and before daylight start on my way back, my horse is tied up in the woods behind the field gate, and I know the roads perfectly well."

Mary was rejoiced to see her brother; but she could not become reconciled to his being a Union soldier.

Neither was there solace nor satisfaction in the idea that the country would soon be in the hands of the Federals. Having no spite to vent or revenge to satisfy she had no use for the means to accomplish these ends. She bore no malice against any one; and if left to her choice would rather live in obscurity, and even bondage, with the Confederates, than be free under Union rule. Of course, she would have

her uncle released and returned to his home and family; but there was something in the fall of the rebel cause that struck a sympathetic chord in her heart, and made her almost wish for their success.

As she saw her brother to bed that night and kissed him tenderly, she could not refrain from whispering:

"Tom, if Uncle Mason were safe at home and you were in the other army, I would rejoice in my heart if the Yankee army remained at Snow Hill till doomsday."

"You simple child," he replied, "by what strange infatuation have you become such a rebel. I shall begin to think you have a lover on that side if I hear any more of such sentiments. Keep a good watch, and should you hear or see anything call me at once. I shall not sleep very soundly you may depend, for danger lurks where rebellion lingers. A few more days and I shall rest as securely here under the ægis of the government of the United States as I did on my mother's lap. But now, a hasty nap and then away to the Federal camp."

CHAPTER V.

"OH, WHY CAN YOU TWO NOT BE FRIENDS?"

WOMEN are ever charmed with the pride and panoply of war; nor are they particular as to its cause, or reasonable as to the end to be attained by the wage of battle.

A dashing bandit maintaining a predatory struggle with some tyrannical power, or a gallant chief fighting for liberty of conscience or freedom of native-land, are heroes alike in her romantic imagination, and she will just as faithfully follow the fortunes of the one as the other. Always true and constant in her devotions, and never false to her choice even to the last.

No soldiery in ancient or modern times was ever more beautifully and nobly sustained by the smile of woman than that of the South in the late war.

It might be truthfully said, that every man who went into the field on that side either had his Penelope at home or his Dulcinea at her father's castle. And just as truly may it be written down to their everlasting credit, that no women ever submitted with a better grace to the awful calamity which terminated their Odyssey, and sent back their gallant

knights, stript of the regalia of war, and clothed in tattered rags—no more to ride resplendent in the front of battle, but to drudge to life's long and weary end abjectly by their sides.

The camp of the Confederates was pitched a few miles below the Maryland border, some twenty miles above the Court-house of Accomack. Here, on the same evening that Colonel Tom Burton appeared so suddenly at Whitemarsh, was held a grand military ball. The *elite* of the two counties was gathered there on that occasion to do honor to those who were about to lay down their lives upon the altar of their country, for it cannot be doubted that the rank and file of that little army went up there to fight. They were few in numbers, poorly equipped, many of them having neither arms nor ammunition. "But had not our fathers so fought in the great revolution? God fought for them, and will fight for us." Thus they talked, their own beloved Wise, always eloquent, had told them to take the Constitution in one hand and the flag in the other, and with scythe blades, if they could procure nothing better, meet the foe, "eye to eye and toe to toe, and clash the steel."

They took their crude arms and went; but alas! they left the Constitution and the flag behind. The ball came off.

It was not exactly the eve of battle, as it was in Belgium's capital the night before the great Waterloo, but, in this instance, "there was a sound of revelry by night," and there were "fair women and brave men," and "soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again," and all such as that. The Philadelphia school-teacher was there with another class of girls, and scores of the fair alumnæ of her celebrated institute.

She herself was frisk and gay, still on the hunt for a husband, and vieing with the most engaging of her old pupils in all those artful ways a woman of her experience and age invariably calls to her aid, in order to make up for the lost weight occasioned by absence of youthful freshness.

Captain Walsingham of the Confederate cavalry found himself bored to the quick by what he was pleased to term her "infernal *blase*," manners and "eternal clatter," both ideas being in his mind inseparably connected with all Northern women.

Miss Savage was there, phlegmatic as ever, and moving through the mazy waltz with an effort which brought into requisition all the resources of heart and lungs.

But of all the young ladies of marriageable age (and that

period comes early in a young girl's life in Virginia), who were present that night, Miss Kate Moore was decidedly the first both in point of beauty, elegance of dress, and prospects of future wealth. She was the only daughter of one of the largest land and slave owners in the State. It was hinted by the knowing ones that his estate was heavily mortgaged; but his roll of slaves was counted by hundreds, and it was easy to turn those into hard cash, some of them being sacrificed every year to meet current expenses and pay poker debts. But the natural increase was equal to the current demand, and the women being good breeders, with about the same arrangements and care for the propagation of the young negroes as was exercised in the barn-yard for the raising of stock and for the same purpose.

Miss Kate was not only rich and handsome, but she was intelligent, sprightly, and captivating—a young lady, in a word, to be sought after by all the aristocratic young gentleman of the peninsula; and so she was.

In this race Captain Claude was the choice of all competitors, and held the fort of the young lady's affections against all other assailants.

He chaperoned her at the ball and was so assiduous in his attentions that all the rest of her suitors retired from the field in disgust.

The poet Campbell was truly prophetic when he said that, "Coming events cast their shadows before."

Instinctively we feel the approaches of great transmutations. The two young lovers had that feeling at the military ball that night; and impressed with the idea that their time was growing short, they made up their minds to make the most of the present opportunity.

By the hour of ten, these two individuals had ceased to mingle in the dance, and had appropriated to their own proper use and behoof the little latticed porch which opened out upon the garden, in the rear of the old mansion where the ball was being held.

The season was rather too far advanced to take much stock in spooning by moonlight; but it was one of those mild evenings in late October, that we call Indian summer, and when the fires of love are burning in the heart, young people don't mind the cold. On this occasion was arranged the serious matter which in the first chapter of this book made trouble along the bay shore, when a certain young captain took a long farewell of his bride elect and went off to the wars to fight for her, and their country.

Whether prompted by true love or convenience or mere fashion, let no man judge. It is sufficient for our purpose to say that Claude Walsingham and Kate Moore did then and there plight their troth, swearing by moon and stars, and everything else high and holy, to love and cherish each other, so long as they both should live.

But even while they lingered an orderly intruded upon the privacy of their little trysting-place, handing Claude a dispatch.

Excusing himself, he took the unwelcome missive into the house to a lamp and read:

"A Yankee spy, thought to be Tom Burton the Abolitionist, has been seen in the neighborhood of Whitemarsh. You will take a detachment of your company and, if possible, capture him, dead or alive."

To Captain CLAUDE WALSINGHAM.
Commanding Company A.
39 Reg. Va. Vol.

By order of CHAS. STITH.
Colonel Commanding Confederate forces.

How inopportune! Was it an omen or a simple coincidence? A day might not pass before a battle, and yet he was not permitted to spend just this one evening with his sweetheart. But as in the story of Paul and Virginia, it was the old man's voice warning them to separate—a voice that was often heard in those days, and in many cases only a substitute for the more solemn summons of the old rattling, rollicking man of bones with his ghastly smile and glistening sickle. As anxious to distinguish himself in his profession as to distance his rivals in the more bloodless campaign of courtship, Captain Claude bade Miss Moore a hasty good-night, telling her that important business called him away from her dear side and the joyous festivities of the hour, and drove to his head-quarters, where, selecting eight of his best men, he set off in a swinging gallop in the direction of Whitemarsh.

It was after two o'clock in the morning when, with foaming steeds, the detachment reached the house where the bold spy was locked in the embraces of Morpheus, as securely as was Sampson when the treacherous Delilah delivered him over to the Philistines to be shorn of his puissant locks. Fast as the chief of the little band had ridden, his thoughts had run faster still of Mary and all her kindness and all her suffering, and although he hated Tom Burton more than he did any

other living man, he resolved to spare him if he could for his sister's sake.

So he did not allow his men to enter the gate, but halted them on the outside while he rode up alone to the house. First, going to the kitchen, he waked up the negress, who reluctantly admitted him; standing before the hearth on which blazed a lightwood knot, he took out his pencil and wrote on a small piece of blank paper:

"If Mr. Tom Burton is in the house and will permit me to see him, I can save his life; otherwise I must not be held responsible or blamed if anything of a serious nature should happen to him.

"CLAUDE WALSINGHAM."

"Here," he said, handing the note to the old woman, "take this into the house quietly, give it to your Miss Mary and say the gentleman is waiting for an answer. Do you hear?"

"Yes, sah!"

"Then get along quick or I'll cut your head off. But be sure to make no noise."

The old woman made no delay, Mary was easily awakened. In fact it is doubtful if she had slept at all. The instant the old servant called she knew her fears "had boded all too true." Her first thought was, "my brother is surprised and lost." She snatched the note hastily, and read it, tears already in her eyes.

By this time Colonel Burton himself was downstairs and at her side. She handed him the note, trembling from head to foot.

"Don't be alarmed my sister. Go put on a dress as quick as possible. We may need you."

Mary obeyed mechanically.

The Union officer took his pencil and wrote on the back of Claude's missive."

"Mr. Thomas Burton is not here; but Colonel Thomas Burton is, and at your service."

Passing the scrap of paper to the old woman he bade her take it back to the waiting gentleman.

In a minute Claude knocked at the door, and Colonel Burton told him to walk in. The latter had examined his pistols and laid them on a table at his side.

"Ah, I see you are prepared for emergency," exclaimed the Confederate, as he entered the room.

"It is only a precaution, sir, my profession teaches me. But, since you seem to be on a peaceful mission, I shall re-

place my weapons, and meet you without suspicion or reserve."

"Then, I have the pleasure of meeting Colonel Tom Burton?"

"You have, sir; and it has been many days since we saw each other last."

"It has; our meeting then was under different circumstances."

"So it was, Captain Walsingham; and——"

"And I told you then, if you remember, what your Abolition friends would bring us to," interrupted Claude. He went on: "I should think the condition in which you find your poor sister and her friends would touch your heart, and cause you to realize in some degree the ruin your false teaching has already wrought."

As he talked Colonel Burton sat quietly regarding his old adversary with a look of half contempt and half anger. As Claude finished his last remarks, Mary entered the room. Her features betrayed the alarm she felt, but her soft dark eyes were full of pleading.

"So you blame me for it all, do you, Claude Walsingham? Let me put a plain question to you."

"Speak on, sir."

"Have you nothing to reproach yourself for? Is it you or I, who has visited upon the gentle and unoffending person you named, and many others like her, all these troubles you refer to? Who but you and your infamous clique has done it? It is like your persecution of innocent preachers. Little wonder is there, however, that men who can fight for slavery can feel any compunction of conscience for the oppressed. Shame, shame on you, Claude Walsingham, to be so near these helpless women and see them treated thus, and never give them a helping hand."

The old Burton blood was thoroughly aroused. Colonel Tom's eyes flashed like meteors.

"Do not tempt me, sir; your words are hot and insulting for a prisoner, and you may be sure I would not stand and take them were you not in my power. You must not presume too much upon the presence of your sister and my friendship for her."

"Friendship!" repeated Colonel Burton, with a sneer of derision.

"Remember, Tom Burton, you are my prisoner and your liberty, ay, sir, your life, is at my option. This house is surrounded by a detachment of my company, and at a moment's warning your fate is sealed."

"Ha, ha," laughed the Union officer. "You doughty Confederates cannot stand the onslaught of truth quite as well as you can the smell of gunpowder. You are brave, I know, in one sense—cowards in another."

Claude grasped his pistol.

"Nobody but a man in your situation could talk to me thus, and in that hated uniform, which in your case clothes a worthless renegade."

Mary was already standing between them. "Who shoots first, slays me," she said. Claude continued:

"This parleying with a prisoner is unparalleled in the annals of warfare. I have already been too lenient."

"Claude Walsingham," replied the other, more calmly than he even thought he could speak, "I am here at your service. You may proceed with me as you see fit. If I was born to be killed in this wretched and fratricidal war, I can die in no better place than among the only friends I have on earth, and by no better hands that I know of."

"Please, gentlemen, do not talk in this way. I had rather die myself than see you two forever enemies. You are both Virginians, both brave men, both white men. Why cannot you two be friends?"

"Because," said Claude, "your brother is an Abolitionist and a renegade."

"Because," replied Colonel Burton, "your *friend* is a Bourbon and a rebel."

They both moved toward each other. Mary held up her hands in pitiable attitude.

"Whatever *you* may be to me Miss Burton, you ought to remember one thing, and that is, no man who wears that uniform can beard me thus."

"Ha, ha," laughed Burton, again growing cooler; "you shall see the day you will respect it, and on my body too. If you are as brave as Southern men generally are, and will have your troop show me fair play you shall not be in waiting long for that time to arrive."

"Brother! Captain Walsingham! if you have any respect or love for me, if either of you cherishes one pleasant memory of the past or my former solicitude for the well-being of both of you, spare each other—spare my brother, Captain Walsingham." The pleading eloquence of the beautiful girl touched them both.

"It was my purpose, Miss Burton, as Heaven is my witness, to do so; but—"

"Then come this way—Tom—come with me,—leave, fly—"

"Fly, sister? You know not what you say" exclaimed the Federal colonel, indignantly.

"But, brother, that cannot compromise your bravery. Come, for God's sake!"

"She says rightly," added Walsingham. "To obey her is not cowardice. Mark me, I go for my men. They are at the gate. I shall submit to no more temporizing. If you remain in this house until I return I shall arrest you as a spy, and you will die an ignominious death as you desire. For your sister's sake, I offer you this one more chance;" and without another word he bowed to Mary and walked out of the room.

"Now, brother—darling Tom, now is your time. Fly, fly for your poor sister's sake! Come this way." She forced him toward the door. He halted moodily.

"It is dishonorable. I will not run," he said doggedly.

"Not for my sake, Tom? Look at me, think how long I have suffered—see how I am dying for you—"

"Yes, that is why I crave vengeance."

"But you cannot get it here. Live, live, Tom, to seek it in some way when your sister's life will not pay the forfeit. Oh, I hear their horses' hoofs. My God, they are in the yard. Oh, Tom, have you no love for me? Has your country no further use for your service? See our dear mother from Heaven—"

At the mention of his mother's name Burton started as if shot. His countenance changed. He stared deep down into the depths of her dark eyes, limpid with tears, as if he saw the sacred face of the dead one there.

Mary had finished her entreaties, and was sinking to the floor. The soldiers were in front of the house. Imprinting an impassioned kiss on the almost inanimate lips of the girl, he seized his pistols, one in each hand, and leaped out into the back yard.

A dozen shots went whizzing after him. Two were returned, and as many men reeled out of their saddles.

"Damnation!" exclaimed Captain Walsingham, "he has killed two of my men. Pursue him!—head him off! Show him no quarter!—take him dead or alive!"

The command was futile. Before the soldiers could recover from the shock occasioned by the fall of their two comrades, throw down the fence and enter the cornfield into which the lucky Colonel had fled, he was out of sight and his whereabouts uncertain. Behind the shadow of the out-buildings he doubled, came back into the yard, walked leisurely out to the road, and turning into the thicket a short distance below the house, sought his horse in the woods, reloaded his pistols,

and taking an untraveled by-way jogged quietly on to Snow Hill, while his infuriated and disappointed assailants were vainly scouring the cornfield, cursing the good fortune that had kept him out of their clutches.

Mrs. Mason coming to Mary's assistance, found her returning to consciousness.

"Oh, is brother safe, dear Aunty? Tell me!"

"God grant he is. Did you hear the firing and the curses?"

"Yes, yes! Heaven save my dear Tom!"

"Heaven will, my child."

"And Claude—"

PART II.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW REGIME.

THE military venture of the people of the Eastern Shore was destined to end in little bloodshed and less glory.

Failing to obtain reinforcements from General Magruder at Yorktown, assailed in front and rear and flank, the little heterogeneous camp broke up, the greater part of the soldiers throwing down their arms, and, accepting of General Dix's generous proclamation, returning to their homes. Some, among them Claude Walsingham, as we have already seen in the first chapter, escaping to the Western Shore.

It was toward the end of November, 1861, when down came the army of occupation with all the pomp and eclat of an easy victory.

It came, like any other army, flushed with success, confident, bold and boisterous, striking terror to the hearts of non-combatants, foraging the country for supplies, paying in promises to be realized after days of trouble in proving accounts, arresting all who dared express sympathy for the cause of rebellion, digging up buried Confederate, flags even searching for them under the petticoats of recalcitrant females, and committing a thousand and one other acts of annoyance to the subjugated people they had come among. Many of these had friends and relatives on the other side, and were in almost weekly communication with them by means of blockade running, which was carried on extensively on account of the large profits it offered to the hardy men engaged in it.

Many were the families compromised by this means, whenever an unfortunate blockader was captured; and arrests, quickly following, kept the old jail at the court-house full of political prisoners. These difficulties, of considerable moment at first, became less frequent, under the searching espionage of the military authorities, and as the theatre of war became removed farther away, almost ceased before the end of the struggle.

The gory tide of battle rolled on, the absent ones came not back.

Society on the Eastern Shore went into winter quarters, on the advent of the northern troops, not to hibernate for a season, but upon conditions similar to those upon which the flower of the community had enlisted, to wit: for three years or the war. As a snail will draw itself up in its shell and refuse to come out, so the disgruntled people of the peninsula shut themselves up in their houses and refused to be comforted because their loved ones were not at home. The doors of the churches were closed, the usual winter amusements neglected.

Outside of the usual excitement about the Federal camp, to which all the negroes in the two counties fled in hope of gaining their freedom, and to offer their services for camp duties, the gloom and silence of the grave settled down upon the place, at least for that winter.

To the mind of Mary Burton, so long harassed by doubts and fears, and oppressed by misfortunes growing out of the position of her family in society, there came no relief with the advent of her protection. Like the stupefied prisoner who from long imprisonment had become so accustomed to his dungeon that he at last preferred it to freedom, so she could find no solace in the new order of things.

True, her uncle was released and come home to rehabilitate his naked farm; there was joy at Whitemarsh, but Mary still sat in the darkness and shadow of death. How could she, as she was constituted, rejoice in that one single ray of happiness, and all the shore wrapped in mourning?

It was bad enough, truly, to be ostracized and deserted, but to see other people miserable did not relieve her, but only added another sorrow, that of sympathy and commiseration.

Of all the arguments against eternal future punishment and full knowledge of everything by those in Heaven, that is the strongest, which by its very absurdity supposes no pang for the sufferings of the damned in Hell.

What was life worth to Mary Burton, if all the world else was in torment? Under such circumstances Paradise itself were as bleak and barren as a desert waste, and as cold and cheerless to her, as though she walked along the glittering halls of some stupendous ice palace, peopled with the pallid and speechless ghosts of the dead.

"Alas! Tom, I sometimes feel, however strange it may appear to you, it had been better if you had remained up there in Maryland and let our own people alone. There is such a dearth of everything that is compensation to the spirit of one who has always sought her own happiness as I have in the reflection which flowed from that of others." So she felt and so she talked, while her brother laughed at her folly, and chided her morbid sentiments; all of which did no good, for Mary was, like everybody else, bereft; the new order of affairs not only failing to give back to her her former friends, but making them more and more estranged.

It was a week or so after the occupation of the county by the Federals, that a buggy containing an old gentleman and a young lady drove up to the head-quarters of the commanding general.

"You will hold the mare, Kate, while I go and see him. You will have to watch her carefully, for you know she does not like those blue-coats any more than you or I," said the old gentleman as he scuffled out in front of the gate that opened into the grounds of a magnificent residence which had been confiscated and appropriated for military purposes, and was the head-quarters above referred to.

"If she hated them as much as I do, she would kick every one that comes within her reach, I'm sure. Take care, papa, and don't get into any difficulty."

"So, so, daughter, I shall do the best I can; but I hav'n't got long to live, anyhow, and if they kill me they'll be doing me a service, since they've taken all my niggers, and most all of my corn and fodder."

"I do declare, I get out of all patience whenever I have to look at one of them. Never mind, Mr. Blue Coats, our boys will come back from Dixie some of these days, and make you skedaddle, I'll bet."

Then, as if ashamed of her own slang, she sat herself back in the corner of the vehicle and drew down her veil.

"I do not want one of those hateful Yankees to see my face," she added, setting herself as far back as she could get.

By this time the old gentleman had disappeared into the house.

Possibly it was about ten minutes afterward that a company of soldiers came marching by, beating a drum, the bright bayonets of their muskets flashing in the sunlight. The fiery mare, unjaded by the long drive, pricked up her ears, turned suddenly around and darted off at a breakneck speed down the road. All attempts to check her either by the lady or those whom she passed on the road proved unavailing, as the frightened beast flew like the wind in the direction from whence she had come.

For a mile the road stretched in a direct line in a southerly direction, then breaking off abruptly toward the east passed through a thick wood.

When out of sight of the village, and rushing with the buggy through the wood aforesaid with the celerity of a reindeer, the fair occupant, oblivious to all around her, she having fallen into a swoon, a Federal officer returning from a country drive met the runaway, and, leaping from his saddle by a masterly performance, brought the panting animal to a standstill.

Observing at a glance the condition of the lady, and seeing that much of the harness was disarranged and broken, the timely rescuer slipped the filly from between the shafts, tied her to a sapling, and while his own horse stood meekly by regarding the scene with as much composure as his master, the latter turned his attention to the lady; and as she was still insensible he lifted her from her seat to the ground.

The effort aroused her, and looking up into his face with a surprised and frightened manner, inquired:

"Who are you? Where am I?" Then almost immediately regarding his uniform with a glance of scorn that would have withered any one but a soldier, she exclaimed: "Let go of me! Please do not touch me. I hate you!"

The officer smiled.

"You are not a gentleman, sir, to interfere with a lady in this way," and her large blue eyes spoke volumes of indignation.

"Well, Miss, if it will do you the least particle of good to know it, I am Colonel Tom Burton the Abolitionist. Your horse was running away. In a little while you would have been dashed out and killed. I took the liberty to stop your horse without waiting to ask myself if you would thank me or no. As you seem to have no further use for me, I shall remount my horse and leave you to shift for yourself. But, surely," he added in a milder manner, "you are unfit to be left alone here in the road where there is no assistance of any sort."

"I must thank you for your trouble, sir, I admit, but—"

"You are all of two miles from the village, and I would suggest that you allow me to place you upon my horse, who is gentle and will carry you back safely, while I lead yours. Your buggy will have to be fixed before it can be used again," interrupted the colonel.

The color rose in the face of the young lady as the officer was speaking, and when he was silent she spoke, her words coming out of her mouth like shot heated for the occasion.

"That would be a fine sight, wouldn't it. The idea of my riding into Drummondtown on a Yankee officer's horse, I should consider myself everlastingly disgraced, sir, especially when that officer is Tom Burton the renegade."

"You are extremely complimentary, Miss, I must admit. I suppose you will allow me to lead your filly back. I hardly think she will object."

Without replying the lady drew herself up haughtily, carelessly adjusted her shawl and started off up the road.

She had not proceeded three paces before she tottered, falling up against a tree that stood by the roadside.

"You are hurt, Miss, more than you imagine. It is utter folly for you to spurn all help in this manner. My proffers are made on motives wholly unselfish, and with a desire to serve you in your dire extremity. You can certainly not gain anything by such unwarranted, and, if I must be severe, unladylike conduct."

The voice of the Colonel was strong now, and almost commanding in tone. There was something in its deep volume that caused her to look up into his face. She had known him by sight when he was a mere youth, and had heard all sorts of stories about him, none of them calculated to inspire respect or confidence, and she expected to behold a repulsive and ugly if not besotted countenance.

She was agreeably surprised. He was not only tall and well-proportioned, but really handsome. His hair was closely cut, showing the contour of a shapely head behind the band of an ordinary military cap, beneath the visor of which his dark eyes sparkled with wit and intelligence. A long black beard covered the lower part of his face, but between it and his silken mustache a set of pearly teeth gleamed when he spoke, in pleasant contrast. He wore the undress uniform of a colonel of infantry. As she regarded him standing there, the impersonation of perfect manhood, she almost regretted having been so saucy. She stood leaning against the tree.

"You must pardon me, Colonel Burton, if I have been impolite; but we do hate you Yankees so much, and especially one of our own people who has become our enemy, that to treat you otherwise would be to dissemble. I am sure, sir, if you are a gentleman, you prefer honest rudeness to insincere politeness."

"I am forced to admire your candor as well as your pluck; but I do not approve of your discretion. Now it doesn't matter at all to me how rude you are, or what you may say about me or the cause I represent. I know as well as I know that I live, that the time is coming when you people will get out of all such foolishness, when the prejudices of the hour shall have worn out; when you come to know us better. But it is a matter of necessity that you come to some determination as to how you will meet your present difficulty. This is a case in which sense is worth more than compliments, be they doubtful or otherwise. What will you do?"

She reflected a moment.

"Then, will you please ride to the village and acquaint my father of the accident. His name is Colonel Moore. You will doubtless meet him on his way to look for me as he must have gotten through with his business by this time or heard of my mishap. I left him very unceremoniously at the gate of General Lockwood's head-quarters, where I was waiting for him to come out. Rose was afraid of your blue-coated soldiers and ran away."

"This then is your ultimatum, is it?"

"It is, sir. I can allow you to do nothing else for me."

Without another word Colonel Burton raised his cap, bowed politely, mounted his horse and was off.

When Colonel Tom Burton was out of sight, Kate Moore, (for she it was), left her position by the tree, hobbled off a few steps and sat down on the ground to take an inventory of the damage done to her ladyship, as well as to await, as patiently as she could, the coming of her father.

Leaving her thus engaged, it is proper to relate that, since the arrival of the Federal forces, the relation of master and servant had become one of those vexed questions which not only then, but has since been of all others connected with the social revolution in the South, the most difficult to manage.

Colonel Moore had a great many slaves, as has been said before, and they were departing from his quarters as rapidly as the autumn leaves were falling to the ground. To stop this exodus and save some of them he had ventured to apply to the commanding general for assistance and protection.

His daughter, Miss Kate, had accompanied him that morning. The result of the visit so far as she is concerned, the reader already knows. The rest is to follow.

By a hasty examination she found her injury to be only a slight sprain of one of her ankles—merely a temporary shock—the effect of which was already disappearing. A little use of it by walking around soon restored its use, and except some slight pain, she no longer suffered any inconvenience on account of it.

The time since Colonel Burton had left her was inconsiderable in point of actual duration, but her patience was pretty well exhausted when, creeping down the road from the direction of the village, there came an old negro woman, a description of whom may be summed up in the one word: hideous. Her eyes were bleared and rheumy, the lower lids turned outward and hung over on her shriveled cheeks. Her head was as white as cotton, her figure low, attenuated, and bent at an angle of 45 degrees. She walked with a stick or rather shuffled along—a sort of creeping motion—peering this way and that as if in quest of some one or something she was anxious to find.

When Kate Moore first discovered her, she uttered a half suppressed scream. Hearing this the old hag stopped short in the road and ogled at the frightened girl, turning her red eyeballs over and over in a fashion calculated to disgust the most obdurate.

"Merciful Heavens, save me!" exclaimed Miss Moore. "Don't stand there and gaze at me in that manner. Do please pass on," and she put her hands over her eyes to shut out the frightful object.

When she removed her hands the old negress was still there; only a few yards nearer than before.

"Will you please pass on, old woman, for my sake? You do distress me awfully. You frighten me almost to death."

"You didn't used to be afeard of niggers, did ye, Miss Catharine," replied the old woman, in a slow husky voice. Then she moved up a few feet nearer. Her garments were old and tattered and not in condition, as to cleanliness, to add anything to her appearance. She went on: "De Moores nor de Walsinghams nuther, nor any of their set, was ever afeard of niggers till dey was sot free. When you' ole daddy sole my two fine boys to de backwoods, and he put de money on your back in a new silk and satin coat, you was not afeard of niggers den, was you, Miss Catharine? I s'pose you doesn't know who I am, does you?"

"Oh, no. I never saw you before in my life. I do not know what you are talking about. Will you not please go on? Oh! I shall die if she stands there gazing at me in that way."

"Dat's de way you whites do. You wants to get clear of us when we gets old and no 'count. But, Miss Catharine, we niggers is all free now—free as de bird in de air. Your ole daddy can't sell us any more to de backwoods, case dem ole times is done gone now. 'For de year ob Jubelo am come, An de niggars dey am marchin' home!'"

As she sung this couplet, the old woman swayed her little bent form backward and forward, and rolled her eyes until they sunk back into their deep sockets as if she were inspecting the contents of her bushy head. Miss Moore wrung her hands and still pleaded with her to pass on. "Oh dear me! I know I shall have convulsions if I have to submit to this, Will papa never come?"

"Well, I don't want to skeer ye. Ye are a poor harmless critter, jest as harmless as old Susie de witch. But ye's gwine to be married, dey say, to one of de Walsinghams. Dem is high actin' folks, dem Walsinghams; so is de Moores—real nigger 'busin' and nigger 'spizen folks, jest like your set, Miss Catharine. It suits berry well, dat does. But dey say he is gwine to Dixie lan', I spec's it'll be a long time afore he comes back agin, for de year ob Jubelo am come, and de niggars dey am marchin' home. Great folks am wuff nuffin' now. Dere day is done gone by. De bottom log hab come to be de rider. When old Susie gets her ten acres ground and her mule den,

'De rain come wet me.
Sun come dry me.
Go way, white man,
Don't come nigh me,
For de year of Jubelo am come,
And de niggars dey be marchin' home.'"

The frightful grimaces of the old witch, as she sung in her peculiar way the above snatches of cornfield songs, were beyond endurance, and Miss Moore turned, and was making her way down into the depths of the forest to get rid of her tormenter, when she heard a noise as of some one approaching.

In a moment Colonel Burton came up, riding on horseback as he went away.

"Please, sir, protect me from the insults of that old wretch. She has just stood there and tantalized me for the last ten minutes."

Colonel Burton looked at the miserable little bundle of rags and flesh that was neither human nor animal, and replied: "I presume she is harmless. Go on about your business, old lady."

"Ha, ha! he, he! she calls me a wretch, now, case she makes tent she don't know me. Ha, ha! look at ole marster's youngest darter stoppin' here in de woods wid de Yankee man, ha, ha!"

"See, here, if you don't go on I will pick up a club and make you. Do you hear?" said the colonel in a tone firm enough to frighten her off.

"Yes, I hears, yah, yah, yah! ole marster's youngest darter, yah, yah, yah!" she shouted down the road as she hobbled off.

"The impudent old hag says she belongs to us. Really I have no knowledge of her, we have so many of them. But, Colonel," she started up, as if she had forgotten something of great importance, "where is my father?"

"I am very sorry to have to inform you, Miss Moore, that your father is not allowed to come to you.

Kate began to turn pale. The colonel proceeded:

"In his interview with the general he very unwisely allowed his temper to get the better of him, and speaking his mind rather too freely, was sent to prison for disloyalty. I am extremely sorry for it on your account."

"Alas! poor papa!" she exclaimed, breaking down completely.

Colonel Burton turned aside. He had no consolation to offer, at least there was nothing he could say, that would do any good, so he was silent.

"What shall I do, what shall I do? she sobbed. I cannot go home without him. It will kill mother. What shall I do?"

"Permit me to suggest, Miss Moore, that is a question you ought to settle at once, and according to your best judgment. It is growing late and colder every hour, and if I mistake not, you live at a considerable distance from here, This spot offers very few conveniences for you to stop long, your father will be imprisoned for several days at least, and unless he agrees to take the oath of allegiance, it may be months, he may yet have to go to Fortress Monroe, or Fort McHenry; so if you will place yourself under my protection, I will pledge myself upon honor as a gentleman, to take the best care of you I can, and conduct you safely to your home."

"But can I not see my father before I go?" she asked entreatingly.

"I am afraid you cannot. The general is quite incensed

at the conduct of your father, and any appeal to his mercy at this time would prove unavailing, and only serve to add fuel to his anger." Then, while Miss Kate stood irresolute looking sorrowfully upon the ground, as if trying to elect in her mind what to do, he continued :

"If you will permit me, I will lift you into my saddle. You can ride my horse, and I will mount your filly, and see you home. After, I shall have your buggy repaired and sent back to you. In the meantime all that I can accomplish by my influence toward the release of your father shall be done. Are you ready to consent to my proposition, or do you intend to remain here all night ?"

She seemed to be weighing the matter over and over, and the varying shadows which flitted over her delicate blonde features told of the strife within. At last she replied with a sigh that seemed to say, I can do nothing better:

"My unfortunate situation, sir, compels me to accept. But little did I once think I should be brought to this."

"Do not reproach yourself, Miss Kate, I can safely testify it is not your fault, but your misfortune. War times, like necessity, make strange companions. Let us be going."

"And you, Colonel Burton, may as well make up your mind that but for necessity you would not have my company to-day ; but as it is, I am forced to surrender at discretion, and do now put myself under the protection of a Yankee officer. Alas! my poor father, if I could only see him. I do hate so much to go home without him. I am at your service, sir."

CHAPTER VII.

THE CITY BY THE SEA.

Of all the seaport towns in the United States, Norfolk is the most provincial in its appearance.

Indeed, from the days of the Revolution to the date of our story, no city in this rapidly developing and changing country underwent so little alteration.

Its limits, like those of a certain village we have mentioned, were almost circumscribed—not naturally so, but because of the non-progressive character of its leading citizens. For centuries it preserved its general outlines, social customs, and amount of business while other maritime cities of the republic grew and expanded into marvelous porportions.

Since the late war, Northern capital, Northern enterprise and northern industry have been infused into its conservative community, and Yankee push and energy have done a vast deal to alter the normal status and make the future of that old city by the sea a possibility.

This change is most observable in its spacious wharves, its lines of ocean and inland steamers, its improved architecture, especially in its West-end (all cities have West-ends), and lately in the expansion of its limits.

Slowly but surely its old cobble-stones are being removed and new Belgian pavements laid in their place. Hipped-roofed dwellings, reared in the time of William and Mary, have given place to the mansard, much to the disgust of the antiquarian it is true, but in keeping with the onward march of civilization and refinement. Now and then the fire-fiend sweeps away whole blocks of these old edifices, tottering with age and ready to fall to pieces from delapidation and decay, and new iron buildings go up in their stead. It was the custom, a long while ago, for capitalists to pile their money up in banks instead of investing it in enterprises which would tend to beautify their city and give employment to its poor people; but recent failures and wholesale plundering of their patrons by these rotten institutions have had the effect of releasing capital and directing it into its legitimate and proper channels.

Quaint old city, you have a history special to yourself and memories galore! Here Tom Moore sojourned awhile and wrote his "Lake of the Dismal Swamp." Here G. P. R. James, the "solitary horseman" novelist, lived and wrote many of his most pleasing stories. Here the scourge of fever has been felt in its ravages, and here the tocsin of war has often been sounded. The Elizabeth River with its many branches flows up from Hampton Roads, dividing Norfolk from Portsmouth, its sister town, and teaming with boat life such as is seen in no other harbor in the world; and remarkable for the diversity of its craft—varying in rig and size from a pirogue to a ship of the line.

A mixed and busy (from a Southern point of view) population crowd the main streets, toil about the docks, and congregate about the market-place, representing every phase of social life from the homeless waif of a negro to the scion of Virginia's bluest blood.

Pure Anglo-Saxon extraction is the boast of the aristocracy, and it must be admitted, if such can be found in any spot in America, one might hope to see it here. From these families

still spring young men of excellent culture and fine physique, and young girls whose beauty of form and feature is not equaled in any other city of its size in the world. The soft, balmy Gulf air coursing through the pine woods, bestows that delightful complexion one sees there in the faces of its women, which, in connection with good blood and excellent breeding, makes Norfolk women desirable ; not only on account of their great beauty, but exalted qualities. Their unaffected truthfulness, and easy and apt adaptability to domestic duties, have grown into a proverb which says, "Happy is the man who finds his wife in Norfolk."

Of this old borough, as it appeared in 1861, we now propose to write, and so, leaving Kate Moore in the hands of her captor, let us follow the fortunes of her affianced as he journeys toward this little city by the sea.

December was at hand. Stern winter had closed in upon an unusually pleasant fall, and an ever-to-be-remembered epoch was drawing to its close. It was the harvest of a thirty years sowing to the wind, and a devoted country was preparing to reap the whirlwind.

Proudly throbbed the heart of the young Confederacy. Her recent trials of strength with an over-indulgent parent, resulting in a victory for her cause, had not only fulfilled the predictions of her great men in regard to her prowess and the personal bravery of her sons, but had inspired her with an overweening confidence which nothing less than four weary years of bitter strife could daunt.

Catching the military spirit, the Southern patriots rushed wildly to the border, infused with all the romance of battle and all the bright prospects of a speedy recognition of their government's independence by the world. The population of the border towns was increased to ten times their normal numbers.

Norfolk fairly blazed with enthusiasm, and was overrun with soldiers. Not even the new capital on the James could compare with her for gayety during that gala winter season of '61 and '62. Troops from Mississippi, troops from Louisiana, troops from Georgia, Alabama, and the Carolinas thronged her streets or tented among her suburbs.

The navy yard at Gosport, only partially destroyed by the Federals when they left it to their successors, had been reconstructed and was the scene of great activity. Here the "Merrimac" was receiving her armor of plate, destined, ere long, to astonish the world by her wonderful exploits.

Gaudily attired officers and smiling women paraded the

streets and public walks by day, and reveled in the giddy dance at night.

Loud people and fast, attracted by the glamour of military display, flocked into the old city until every nook and corner was overflowing with humanity. Every day was turned into a pageant and every night into debauchery.

Beauty and the beast held high carnival. The sound of the drum and fife, the strains of martial music, and the novelty of everything gave the scene a picture of mediæval splendor, and an unrestrained gush of feeling that carried people off their equilibrium.

Men and women of all classes took the liberty to distort their conduct.

Even the military was allowed *carte-blanche.* It seemed to be the policy of their leaders to indulge them. It was necessary that the most alluring side of the tableaus be first presented. The young soldier must not be frightened by a contemplation of the horrors of war. He must be tempered to the service. Veterans are not born like poets, but made—hardened as steel is hardened out of iron.

The raw recruit must be fitted for the slaughter, fed upon the smiles of fair damsels and drenched with conviviality, before he is marched off into the field to face the red bolts of hell.

For all such tender plants, Norfolk was a fitting hothouse—a nursery where luxury and vice vitiated the moral sense and cultivated all the vicious tendencies of the human heart.

First of all came woman with her man-making and man-destroying appliances. The purest and best of these cast themself into the whirling vortex of excitement with an abandon that, under other circumstances, would have been considered by the most liberal of either sex, as indecent boldness, while the *demi-monde* opened boldly their gorgeous temples of lasciviousness to the young hero of Mars, and *blasé* courtesans led the dance in the more degraded dens of infamy.

And then, the display, the allurements of camp life, and the blissful luxury of idleness!

Under the gaslight, into the noisy throng, through the glaring streets of this Babylon, teaming with men, women and children, black and white, amid the rolling of drums and piping of fifes, rode our three voyagers in the creaking old ambulance, tired and dusty from the effects of their long drive, but already obnoxious to the spirit of wantonness that filled the place, late in the afternoon of the same day of their arrival at Linn Haven.

The hotels being crowded to overflowing, our new-comers were forced to seek lodgings in a private boarding-house. This they found, without much trouble, at 229 Main street, where a lady lived with whom Captain Evans was well acquainted. Captain Walsingham found at this place some acquaintances, refugee members of his own regiment, who had preceded him to Dixie. By these and the other boarders the young officer was received with open arms, he and his two companions being provided for in the most comfortable manner. The hostess, a Mrs. Kendall, was an Eastern Shore lady herself, having married a Norfolk gentleman; and although she was not rich, by any means, she was a good housekeeper, and her table reflected the glow of the flush times of the period. Pipes, wine, dancing, poker-playing, a jolly madam and a quiet sort of fifth-wheel-appendage of a husband, was the general programme at 229 Main Street.

Tea was over, and half a score of gentlemen, mostly of the army, bearing commissions from that of brigadier to third lieutenant, were congregated in the little go-as-you-please parlor, which reeked with the curling smoke of almost as many pipes as men. There was something very social and homelike to Claude in these surroundings, while Captain Evans and Sammy really rejoiced in the pleasure of unrestrained familiarity.

The arrival of our Eastern Shore friends was quite apropos.

A certain Miss Buttercup, a society woman of almost world-wide reputation, had invited the officers boarding with the good Mrs. Kendall to a soirée at her house in Freemason Street, the party being given exclusively in honor and for the benefit, of her distinguished household, and this was the evening it was to come off.

Now, Miss Buttercup was not the only lady who was entertaining soldiers in Norfolk, by any means. All the ladies were actually vying with each other in offering every means in their power to contribute to the happiness of the brave defenders of the sacred soil.

But Miss Buttercup's parties were phenomenal. The character of the woman lent a sort of unusual charm to her hospitality.

In the first place, she was beyond question beautiful; and, what was of equal consequence, she was brilliant. A host of admirers thronged her pathway. Jealous, namby-pamby old maids at the West-end—all cities have West-ends—said she was fast, and, indeed, the best society had cut her to some

extent for what they considered a loudness, too loud for the moral ears of the South.

But this had all been cured by the great upheaval of the war, and Miss Buttercup, whose name had been somewhat beclouded in her own town, again burst forth in all the splendor of her unparalleled loveliness, and all the glory of her poetic genius; for in her case dame Nature had for once broken her almost inexorable law, by bestowing upon this Norfolk woman all the graces and attractions of her sex, both in form and features, and, at the same time, granting her an intellect superior to that of most people. Her prose writings were profuse and clever. Her poetry readable. But it was her personal beauty which attracted most. In style she was a soft brunette. Her eyes were dark, hair brown, complexion olive, lips pink, teeth pearly. Indeed, so lovely was this woman, from a physical point of view, that sculptors sought her boudoir, and painters courted her presence, eager to perpetuate, in marble and on canvas, the outlines of her perfect limbs, or oriental countenance. Such was the woman who was to entertain Mrs. Kendall's shoulder-strap gentry in her gorgeous salon this evening.

The invitation is to every one of you who wears an officer's uniform," exclaimed the good lady coming into the beclouded sitting-room.

"And all new-comers of the same stamp, are included," she added, casting a knowing glance at Claude.

"Of course, Captain Walsingham is one of us, and will favor us with his company. Why, sir, I long to present you to the finest specimen of womanly humanity you ever saw. The Prince of Wales last year was entirely gone on her, danced his first set with her in Washington, they say, and, do you know, sir, that she is one of the three leading belles of this country. The President's niece, sir, Miss Lane, the celebrated Madam Le Vert of Mobile, and lastly, but not least, Miss Buttercup, are the three ladies referred to, sir. By the by, did you know that Miss Buttercup's portrait was on exhibition at the World's Fair in London, along with that of the Duchess of Sutherland, and that the two were voted the handsomest brace of women in the world? I tell you what, sir, she is a stunner, and few people are the recipients of such an honor as we are to-night. You may rely upon that, Captain Walsingham."

The talker was a brigadier past the middle age of life, loquacious and genial.

"I must admit, General, I have heard something of this

paragon of yours in my own out-of-the-way county on the other side of the bay, and while, from what I have heard, I am inclined to think she is rather bold, still I have great curiosity to see her, and although I am entirely out of the market, as the saying goes, I ought to be able to face even the battery of her eyes, without getting so much as singed by the fire of her good looks."

"Very good, Captain; all I have to say is, if you come away safe and sound you'll be the first one yet to do so who has ever encountered Miss Buttercup's charms."

But here is my friend Captain Evans, who has as honorable a title as any of us. It is not proper for me to leave him, seeing it is the last night he is to remain in the city before his return," suggested the young officer.

"Which are wery kind and considerate of you, Captain Walshingham, to think of your old friend under sich restinguished circumstances. But pray, gentlemen, do not relow me to interfere in the remotestest degree with your plans and purposes. We uns, that is me and Sammy, can regale ourselves here by the fire untwill you uns returns."

"Which you shall by no means do, Captain Evans. You too shall accompany us. You and Captain Walsingham just walk up into my room and see what I shall do," exclaimed the jolly old brigadier. "This is not to be a masquerade, it is true, but a little deception won't hurt," he continued, after they had ascended to the third floor and were safely ensconced in the general's bed-chamber. "Here is a suit of regimentals left here by a room-mate of mine, Major Begard, who has run off on a little trip to Richmond. What say you, Captain Evans, to donning this uniform and becoming one of our party?

"A moist excellent idear, Gineral, moist excellent. I can play that ar' roll ter perfection, gentlemen, provided the trowsers is not a mite too full in the front," said the old salt, holding up the garment mentioned in front of him, surveying critically the enormous proportion of that part of their build to which he had referred.

Claude was amused at the scheme.

"Suppose you try them on," suggested the general.

The objection which the old waterman had expressed at first sight was confirmed; for while he was a powerful individual, in point of size, his rotundity was not equal to that of the absent major, and the old man's eyes dropped in disappointment. But it was only a momentary discomfiture.

You jest step down-stairs, and tell the landlady ter send me up a needle and thread, friend Walshingham, we'll take

a herrin'-bone reef in these 'ere unmentionables behind, and ef they don't fit this old hull, you may call me a land-lubber."

Captain Evans proved himself to be as good at tailoring as boating, and in the short space of ten minutes was ready to put in his appearance in the parlor below, sustaining his new promotion with all the dignity of a gentleman of his parts and perfectly at home with his gaudily attired associates, who were awaiting his debut.

His reception was a regular ovation, and the general highly praised for the ingenuity which had prompted him to think of the arrangement. Congratulations were in order, hand-shakings, bravos, and even Mrs. Kendall was called in to take a look at her new acquisition in the shape of another gentleman of such high rank, and *distingué* appearance, at the conclusion of all of which ceremony they bundled off in the direction of Freemason Street, leaving Sammy to entertain his genial hostess with *on dit* of her old home and stories of hair-breadth escapes relating to blockade running and so forth.

It was nine o'clock when the gay party from 229 Main Street, reached their destination.

Miss Buttercup lived in grand style. Her salons were not as elegantly furnished as those of the fast women of France, in the days of the revolution, but her manner of living was much after the same fashion. A colored man-servant in full dress met our friends at the door, conducting them to a dressing-room, where they divested themselves of their galoches, and overcoats, and from thence were ushered into the parlor, Miss Buttercup receiving them as they entered. General Wynder (our loquacious brigadier), presented his friends one by one as they filed into the room.

Never was handsomer woman more attractively superb in her get-up, than the fair hostess, while her full, voluptuous form fairly swelled with womanly perfection.

She wore a white satin skirt, with flowing train bespangled with thousands of small gold stars representing the nebulaer of the heavens, while her skirt was trimmed to show the constellations of the zodiac.

Her bodice was cut low in V shape, and *décolleté*. Bracelets, enameled and set in diamonds, encircled her round forearm, and gems of the same quality sparkled in her dark brown hair. White satin slippers peeped out from their hiding place of tulle and lace, and the unmistakable evidence of a luscious womanhood, seemed to struggle with its slight con-

finement, as her pouting bust rose and fell, white and smooth as parian marble.

"This, Miss Buttercup, is Major Evans of the Eastern Shore, a distinguished officer whose gallantry in arms is only equalled by his gallantry in society. I commend him to your regal hospitality," said the general, presenting our old friend.

The major bowed profoundly, and as Miss Buttercup extended her hand he grasped it in his vise-like grip, until the pretty woman almost screamed in agony, causing her to entirely forget the little speech she was about to make.

"I consider this a recashion to be werry proud ev, Miss Buttercup," began the major, still holding the lady's hand, and thoroughly charmed by her beautiful appearance. "We uns seldom hev the honor of meetin' sich as you."

"Your kind compliments, Major, are more than appreciated. It is indeed refreshing to see gentlemen of your age from the quiet country, with habits so domestic and rural, sacrificing everything for their country. We shall surely succeed, sir, when not only our youth, but the bone and sinew of the land have espoused our cause. I welcome you as a friend of General Wynder, and henceforth a friend of mine."

So much sweet condescension was fast telling upon our new major, and he showed no disposition to relinquish his position; but Claude, who was just behind him and next to be presented, fearing the old fellow might betray his disguise, took the part of Mentor and forced him along. So, stumbling over the thick Brussels, like a man who has lost his sea legs, Major Evans, with his regimental coat buttoned up tight to the throat, but rather baggy about the waist, tried to strut back to the rear parlor, with the dignity of one who was proud of his office.

Then came Claude's turn.

"I now have the pleasure of presenting Captain Claude Walsingham, another specimen of Eastern Shoremen, and to prevent any future trouble which might arise on account of you two being enamored of each other, permit me to remark, Miss Buttercup, that our friend's affections are already disposed of; and his heart is not only unfortunately within the Federal lines, but locked up in the bosom of some fair damsel he has left behind, in his sea-girt home across the bay," remarked the general facetiously.

"You are very timely, I might say, a little too previous, in your warnings, General," replied Miss Buttercup, greeting

her new acquaintance with a smile from her rosy lips, which went to Claude's heart, like a flash of electricity. "And I sincerely thank you for your kind consideration for my welfare. But as every thing is fair in love, and war, why not leave us to work out our own salvation? We are both of age, Captain, and might, I think, be able to take care of ourselves. I feel already that we shall be the best of friends. I receive you, sir, with open arms."

"And I," replied Claude with a dash of gallantry quite natural to him, "am truly grateful for the opportunity of rushing headlong into the fond embrace, so temptingly offered."

"There, now, I told you so," blurted out the General.

"Ha, ha! laughed Miss Buttercup. Don't you get jealous General, we'll finish this business by-and-by, Captain," she added with a sly glance at the young officer as he moved on to give place to another one of the numerous company, while Claude, ahead, wounded by the merciless onslaught of her dark eyes, sallied into the back parlor to join his old friend, who had preceded him into that cosy apartment, where an open grate gave a homelike and comfortable aspect to the surroundings and afforded Major Evans an opportunity to taste "the weed," which opportunity he had duly improved and was even now sprawled out on a delicate *tête-à-tête* seat with his long leg and heavy boot thrown independently over the end of it, and at least an ounce of "nigger heel," stowed away in the *cul de sac* of his great square jaw.

"Ain't she a gallus un, Captain? I'll allow her smiles are enough to make a feller feel as ef he begredged the ground she walks onto. Why, sir, a touch av the lips av that ar gal, would wake the dead, Captain Walshingham!"

"You are correct, my friend. And I must admit if things were not as they are at home I should tackle on, as you seamen say."

"As we military gentlemen say," corrected Captain Evans.

"Just so, pardon me. Indeed I should consider myself but sorry merchandise to offer in exchange for such a lovely creature."

"I would rewise you to keep your eye on that cutter, Captain; she are a right smart dangerous craft for sich countrymen as we uns; and as I am gittin' along in years and seen as how you have lowerned your flag to t'other one cross the bay, it wouldn't be altogether the proper thing to swar allegiance to too many petticoat governments at once."

"So, so! but what has a fellow to do? It seems almost impossible to resist."

"True; but we uns must run the gauntlet as best we can."

"Good advice, my old friend; but who ever attempts to pass the battery of her dark eyes will go down, I'm afraid. Brace up, Major, she's approaching us."

She came in with the gait of majesty, leaning on the arm of the venerable General Wynder, her long train sweeping the carpet behind her.

The major had previously divested himself of his quid, not on account of any oral suggestion of his friend, however, but for reasons more selfish and promptings more sensual. The quick eye and ready instinct of the old "sea dog" had been allured and awakened by the sight as well as the odor of viands both elegant and tempting.

A certain flavor as aromatic to his olfactory organ as a zephyr fresh from the groves of Araby the blest, had directed his attention to a table which stood in the far right-hand corner of the room, where glasses, tumblers, and decanters were arrayed in gorgeous splendor, in the midst of which towered the stately outlines of a huge bowl within whose expansive rim there rose the lofty peaks of floating islands disporting themselves upon the amber surface of a delicious eggnog.

Now, if anything in this wide world could coax a chew of tobacco from its hiding-place in the old sailor's mouth it was the fragrance of this favorite Virginia beverage. But Major Evans was not the only negative that was attracted by this positive influence. It was this same thing which had called the fair hostess and her chivalric chaperon into the back parlor, and brought them again in contact with the young captain of cavalry.

As they approached, the latter attempted to speak first, but was anticipated by the doughty general.

"Now, my dear Captain, I am going to commit this lady to your safe-keeping for the remainder of the evening, and in so doing I again must be permitted to call your attention to the fact that you have both been sufficiently warned, and if anything untoward should happen, do not look at me or have the hardihood to say, 'General Wynder did it.'"

"Indeed, my dear General, you shall be entirely exonerated. If we go astray we shall certainly not hold our good guardian accountable and plead the Infancy Act."

"We'll allow the law to take its course shall we not? Miss;" got in Claude.

"By all means, darling," she whispered the last word in his ear.

"So, so! There appears to be collusion already I see, suppose I retire and give you two a chance to hang yourselves?"

"No, General, not so fast; we shall need your gallant services presently over there," she replied, pointing to the table. "As for the Captain and myself, we shall find an opportunity by and by to test the vulnerability of each other's armor. Let us pay attention now to the more important if grosser duties of the occasion. Come on, Captain Walsingham."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

THE reader who imagines that Miss Buttercup is a bad woman, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, and that her true character is not revealed, either because the writer is unwilling, or incompetent to paint such a character, is sadly mistaken.

Certainly, any woman who could enthrall a prince, lead the van of society at our national capital in the palmy days of chivalry, and bring to her feet the leading spirits of the age, should receive some delicacy of treatment even at the hands of the severest critic, and not be insinuated into the lowest depths of infamy and shame without some excuse, or—what was, at the time of which we write, a favorite expression—some "overt act."

In fact, a woman ought to be taken exactly for what she is and what she is worth, and not on trust or suspicion, one way or the other.

It will not do to argue her case from a circumstantial aspect, when one must not even believe his own eyes, as to the truth of this or that, what she does or what is said about her. She eateth and wipeth her mouth, and sayeth: "I've done no evil," and it is not for you or me to say she has.

About one thing there could be no question, and that was, Miss Buttercup's loveliness. She was enravishing; and when she took Claude Walsingham's arm to escort him back to the table, he realized at once how powerless he would be in the hands of such a woman. How, like a poor fly, caught in the

meshes of a spider's web, he might struggle in vain to escape the toils.

But, to him, how little like the fly-catcher's machinations were the sweet influences of the delightful charmer. There could be no danger in yielding to such an innocent enthrallment. There was no design on her part. She was influenced by the same feelings. He was young, handsome and engaging. He was the favorite. She lavished all her meaning smiles on him. He began to feel vain. Her advances met his egotism; her condescension flattered him. The road to her favor lay wide open before him. Whatever she was—and God knows she was sweet—all, all might be his. He was far away from home, and from the one he had vowed to live for; not so far when measured by distance as by time and circumstances. But years might elapse before he again set foot on the Eastern Shore; and all the heart of a young and passionate man could wish for was within his grasp.. Led by the apotheosis of their darling cause, the sons of Mars surrounded the board of Bacchus, Major Revel Evans the foremost in the van. The glasses were filled.

"A toast! A toast!" was echoed from lip to lip. "A toast from Major Evans!"

Claude was fearful that his old friend, already elated by the fumes of the rich grog, would say something to disgust their bountiful hostess, and, by signs and winks, tried to intimate as much, but his efforts were lost in the general merriment.

So it was decided the major should lead off. In the hubbub that worthy had drained his glass, but Miss Buttercup, seeing his awkward dilemma, came to his rescue, saying as she did so:

"I see, Major, what the trouble is. It's the case of the two governors. Let me fill your glass again, and thus shall you receive a new inspiration to aid you in your little speech."

There was a laugh at the major's expense, and, when that subsided, they again arose.

"Speech! Speech! Major Evans!"

The old man spread himself into a sort of Colonel Seller's position, raised his glass to the ceiling, cleared his throat, and began:

"Here's to you, Miss Buttercup, the loveliest lady in Dixie, whose horsepertality we now so richly rejoy; and to you, feller soldiers ev the Southern Confederacy. May the stares and the bares never cease ter wave, and hurrah for Bonegard and Jeff Davis!"

"Bravo, bravo!"

The glasses were emptied and refilled.

"A song! A song!"

Captain Evans was again to the front, waving his bumper. The Major kept time to the following words. which he sang with a swagger:

"Wrap me up in the rebel flag,
Bury me near Jeff Davis;
Give my love to Bonegard
And all the Secesh ladies."

Another, and still another, toast by different gentlemen followed, until the eggnog grew turbid in the bottom of the bowl, and the glowing faces attested the warmth of Miss Buttercup's hospitality. Then, cake was handed. "Lorena." "A life on the ocean wave." "The bonny blue flag." "Dixie," and "Thy bright smile haunts me still," were rendered with an accompaniment, and the party began to show signs of dismemberment.

"You will remain and play me a game of cribbage, Captain Walsingham?"

The request was made in a sweet, persuasive tone. How could he refuse?

It was an easy matter to dodge the crowd, and, while his belated companions were staggering down the street, Claude was locked in with the voluptuous woman.

Claude's experience with women had been of rather a negative character. The conventionalities of society, such as exists in the best circles in rural districts in Virginia—in fact in cities as well, among the same class—forbade any such familiarity on short acquaintance as he was now so fortunate as to enjoy with the lovely Miss Buttercup. At first he was stunned by even an imperfect realization of his good fortune, and felt as if he was unequal to the task his good luck had imposed upon him. He could neither play his cards nor count his game. They sat at the side of card-table in the back parlor, the gas in the front parlor turned off, and only one jet burning in the chandelier overhead, the soft light from the open grate falling on the carpet in subdued and mellow rays. Claude seemed to be in the midst of heaven without the ability to enjoy its privileges. The excitement of his embarrassed situation had overcome the effects of the eggnog.

"My dear Captain, are you unwell," inquired his companion, with solicitude.

"By no means, my dear Miss Buttercup. Only the egg-nog has slightly nauseated me."

"Will you take some brandy?"

Claude assented. Again they sat down to the card-table. He felt stronger. The now languid eyes of the siren, the passion-wreathed mouth, the heaving bosom, as soft and white as eider-down, but as real as flesh and blood could make it, no longer dismayed but stimulated him.

The mountain of loveliness which rose before him expanded with his enlarged faculties; but the will to ascend even to its summit grew also.

They played. Their hands touched. The shy and shapely foot in white satin like a timid mouse after the feast, crept out and half buried itself in the soft Persian rug.

"Fifteen two," "fifteen four," "a pair," "a flush," "a straight," "a go."

"It's your deal."

"No, it's mine."

They laugh at each other's stupidity; they talk foolish talk about the game; a card falls on the floor; both stoop to pick it up; their faces meet. The luxuriant locks of Claude brush the cheek of the lovely woman. Their faces burn, Claude's heart beats against his bosom as if it would leap its barriers. Once more he cannot count the game, but he counts her pretty tapering fingers, shoves back the cribbage board and cards, leans his elbow on the table awhile and moves his chair forward until his feet are now behind and beyond her seat, between it and the table. The folds of her gorgeous dress are mingled with the gray of his uniform.

Gently, as if moved by a spirit hand, the table recedes toward the middle of the floor. By some hocus-pocus maneuver their chairs advance, they now are side by side; his arm, with its glittering gold lace, encircles her peerless waist and her head falls confidingly upon his breast.

Pressing his lips to hers, he whispers.

"Darling;" but she, with eyes like Artesian wells of inexhaustible love, speaks only in the tightened grasp of the hand which her womanly instinct had impelled her to seize for another purpose than to press it closer still to her throbbing bosom.

Shall I go on, reader? shall I tell you how in one short week Kate Moore was forgotten, pledges forfeited, vows broken, manhood lost?

Ah, no! it is useless. You know it all. Alas for that game of cribbage!

It was snowing when Claude left between the small hours of that winter night to seek his boarding-house. The keen air felt good to his hot and burning cheek.

It is said that people change their skies, but not their hearts, when they cross the seas.

Claude Walsingham had done both.

CHAPTER IX.

A TREATY OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE.

BEFORE the reader can be permitted to follow Claude further in his erratic course, it is proper for us to go back awhile to the Eastern Shore and look after Colonel Tom Burton and his protesting captive.

Kate Moore was a defiant rebel, but she was not an ill-bred or unlovable woman. On the other hand, she was not only intellectual, refined and gentle, but in every aspect a person of rare beauty, fully matured and in complete command of herself, there could be no more pleasant a companion where reciprocity of feeling made a free interchange of ideas agreeable and pleasant.

No woman had more respect for truth and honor than she.

If she had given her heart to Claude Walsingham it was his without reserve, and his forever, so long as he deserved it, but no longer. She was not one to love so well as to love unwisely; not that she was incapable of realizing the tender sentiment in all its fullness, or that she lacked any constituent which a perfect woman should possess; but her education had been such that she had learned to control her impulses, restrain her instincts and manage herself without compromising her sex or her dignity. In this way she had accepted Claude. Not in the extravagant outburst of a romantic gush, but in the sober and restrained manner of a well-bred woman.

In Virginia first families, matches are made as much, if not more, for convenience than love; and experience has shown that such marriages are generally more conducive to happiness than the other kind. If the reader will stop right here and think of all the unions that have come under his notice, which have been brought about by clandestine methods, he will be surprised at the very small number of them that have been productive of real happiness. Kate

Moore was capable of marrying even without love, and still making a true and affectionate wife. This may appear to be a paradox, but is truth nevertheless. If it were possible that the seal of her heart were still unbroken—if her feeling for Claude were simply that of respect, if the great depths of her soul had never yet been stirred up from the bottom, she could still marry Claude and be a good wife, and never know any other sentiment except a deepening of that she already felt. If Claude had only entered the outer courts of Love's sacred temple, there lived no other mortal who could ever profane the holy of holies, by an unhallowed intrusion while he was her acknowledged high priest. They had both felt more at parting than is ordinarily the case when friends separate; although both were sustained by ulterior sentiments—he by the allurements held out to him of military glory, and she by the great sacrifice she was making for the cause nearest her heart. How capable their attachment was to withstand the tests of adversity or the temptations of life is yet to be seen.

Now he was in Norfolk, staggering to his boarding-house, his very gloves tainted with the odor of unfaithfulness, and she riding homeward side by side with Tom Burton the Abolitionist, and on the back of his horse on whose hip was branded the hateful letters: U. S.

But Kate Moore was still Claude's and Dixie's, she had not surrendered anything but to convenience and necessity. She was sure of this. If she had parted with a single principle it was only because she could not help it.

Even while Colonel Burton was adjusting her narrow foot into the large stirrup of his Mexican saddle and adjusting her dress, she was all the time biting her lip, and making reservations, reserving rights she would never surrender.

"I very much dislike to make a Union cavalry officer out of you, Miss Moore. There, I expect Ben will carry you safely, if you are a rebel, my saddle's not made for an equestrienne, but must suffice for want of a better. Now, Miss Rose, you have been chasing your shadow for a mile or two, and have no doubt dulled your wiry edge to some extent. I will just lay my overcoat on your back and see how you like the change from your master's buggy, to the position of a war-horse," so he rattled away as he busily prepared his charge and himself, for the journey before them.

"You may depend, Colonel Burton, my aversion to being improvised into such a person is so intense, that it is to me the greatest humiliation of my whole life. Next to death itself I can conceive of nothing worse."

"Really Miss, are you speaking in irony, or in dead earnest?"

"Most positively, sir, in dead earnest."

"Candidly, Miss Burton, do you love anybody or anything? To hear you go on, one would think you are perfectly indifferent to every body and every thing."

"Yes, I love, first, my country, next, my friends; my country and her institutions—my friends and liberty."

"And slavery into the bargain."

"Yes, I do love slavery, and so dearly, that if the South is conquered and slavery abolished I want to die."

"Then, I'm afraid, Miss, your stay with us is not for any great length of time. Two or three years, at most, will settle the matter once and for all. And suppose, for argument's

"And suppose, for argument's sake, you do overrun us with your hordes of vandal soldiers? What then? Do you think for a moment we shall remain subdued? Was ever a people enslaved who, having right and justice on their side, strike for freedom?

"A caged bird elicits some sympathy. What monster would enslave a human being who pants for liberty? No, Colonel Burton, we shall yet be free. We shall triumph in the end. You will soon have to leave this shore, and then—"

"You seem to argue tolerably well from your stand-point, Miss Moore, but blindness in part has shut out from your mental understanding much that is valuable to a correct elucidation of the subject under consideration. You know the old maxim, 'whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad.' To us who reason from different premises, you Southern people seem to look through a glass darkly. In the first place, your notions of liberty are crude—circumscribed; and amount if anything to selfishness. You want liberty, but you want it only for yourselves. In the next place, you have no just cause to secede from a Union that is as considerate of your rights as of any other part of the component whole. Nobody has tried or wants to oppress you. If you are assailed by anything, it is that spirit of progress and sense of justice which is abroad in the civilized world and which will brook no opposition. It is a hard thing to kick against the pricks. How futile to fight against destiny, against God Almighty! Why hold on to effete and worn out institutions? We love the bodies of our friends, but put them out of sight when they die. Why cling to a reeking wrong whose stench offends even the civilization of the Old World. You people appeal to God for the justness of your cause and have faith that He will deliver you. So firmly am I convinced

that you are wrong, that if you succeed and build up your new government upon the principles of slavery, I will believe no more in right, will hope no more in God, but go back and serve the devil as I used to."

"Well, well," Miss Moore replied, petutantly, "let's say no more about it. You think one thing, I another. Time will prove all things, and if your future (forgive me if I speak plainly), is no more remunerative than your past, you will not amount to much."

"I accept your sarcastic reproof, Miss Moore, in good part. I have been anything but a good citizen, especially to myself; but all that is past now. My redemption came with your downfall. What has made me, will crush you. It was not possible for me to rise up to your height until you were deposed. Every dog has his day. Tom Burton the Abolitionist is on the upward, Miss Kate Moore the downward road. Come, let us ride faster, the evening is coming on and we shall be late."

The officer rode up close to his companion, patted the neck of her horse and gave the command, "Gallop, Ben!" and in a moment the noble steed was loping along at a ten-mile gait under the light, graceful figure of his new rider, while the fretful filly, not entirely recovered from her late scare, evinced a metal equal to that of her young mistress, and was almost as hard to control.

Their journey lay through a flat but rather picturesque country, varied alternatively by forest and field. The latter were cropless and dreary, but the former was peculiarly sweet with the odor of dying leaves, many of which still retained their rich tints of red, yellow and purple. Some strewed along the bridle-path, others falling to the ground, and a few yet shivering on the almost denuded boughs.

It was with difficulty that Kate could restrain her tears as she rode along the old familiar highway. That very morning she had passed that same way with her father. He was a prisoner now, and she felt almost heart-broken. The sombre sky, the fully satisfying atmosphere, the subdued manner of the little sparrows, no longer chattering in the exuberance of spring-time—even the sound of the heavily ironed hoofs of her charger sent a painful echo to her soul. Beneath her with his sinewy limbs, she thought, and his neck clad in thunder, was the war-horse that had come bearing the ruthless invader, who was subjugating her fair land, and she was his master's captive, in his power and at his disposal. He the hated Unionist, the despised renegade, the white-livered Abolitionist.

It had scarcely been ten days since Claude's departure, and it seemed to her that sturdy events of years had taken place. As she approached her loved home the thought of meeting her mother, the task of disclosing to her the fate of her father, and the sight of herself, accompanied by a Federal officer, were sources enough for unpleasant reflections.

Her companion anticipated her thoughts, and did all in his power to alleviate her condition.

"Cheer up, Miss Moore; this matter will all blow over in a little while, and you will get your father back all safe and sound. In a month or two you will become reconciled to us, and all will be serene."

"Oh, yes," she replied, bitterly; "so it will, when we all become loyal and take your horrid oath. But we will never do that, sir; no, never. Your words of comfort, if based on such an hypothesis as that, were better unsaid; and your good wishes simply gratuitous and ineffective. This is our gate, sir."

The day was gone. That is, the sun was set and twilight deepening. With the toe of his boot Colonel Burton raised the gate-latch, and they rode through into a long and spacious lawn, in which were the remains of two avenues of Lombardy poplars, one on either side of the road. Many of them were in decay, and all were bare and unattractive. Through the skeleton tops of these trees could be seen the dormers and roof of the old mansion, and, as they approached nearer, the glazed brick of which it was built bore testimony to the fact that at least two centuries had passed since they were made across the sea. An ample portico of more modern construction adorned the front of the building. At the stepping-stone at the door, the two travelers alighted in the presence of a decrepit old negro man, who came up and grasped the rein of his mistress's horse, while he never ceased to regard the stranger with a curiosity that was amusing.

As Miss Moore alighted, which she did without giving her companion an opportunity of handing her down, a large Newfoundland dog ran to her, leaping upon her, and licking her hand. Without acknowledging his caress she accosted the old negro:

"Where is Isaac, Daniel?"

"Done gone, missus."

"Gone where?"

"To de Yankees. missus."

"And Jim?"

"He done gone too"

"And Caleb?"

"He likewise, missus."

"And Cato and Kier, and—"

"All dem done gone, missus. All de niggers done gone 'cept ole Dan'l, bof men, women and childuns."

"Why didn't you go also, Dan?" asked Colonel Burton, in a sort of bantering manner.

"Case Dan'l too old. Dan'el tinks he better stay take care ole missus and young missus."

"Well, take these horses and put them up and feed them. Please walk into the house, Colonel Burton." She said this in a cold, but polite way.

They entered a large hall, in which was a sideboard loaded with divers kinds of glass and china-ware, both antique and modern, and over it hung the broad antlers of a noble buck. Sporting pictures adorned the walls, and a rifle was slung in a rack, with powder-flask and shot-pouch. At the further end stood a tall clock, reaching almost to the ceiling. It was ticking monotonously, and kept not only the hour, but lunar time, the day of the week and month. There was no superabundance of furniture in view, or ceremony in the manner of Miss Moore as she ushered her guest into the large wainscoted parlor, with its lofty ceiling, its exquisitely carved mantelpiece and artistic panels. A suit of modern furniture, Brussels carpet, some divans of older style, a couple of easy chairs and an ottoman, composed the paraphernalia of the room, if we add several life-size busts of the family in oil, which adorned the walls.

"Please be seated, sir. After I have made my mother acquainted with the sad affair at the village, I will return." So saying, she left the colonel alone, in the big parlor, with his thoughts.

"Alas! such is war," he said to himself, "I'm sorry for the poor girl and her mother." Old Daniel came stumbling in with his arms full of wood and kindling; removed the bright fender, and, on his knees, soon made a roaring fire, whose cheerful blaze and comfortable warmth diffused a comfortableness, that was truly grateful.

"What vandals we Union people are," went on thinking Colonel Burton, "If we were not absolutely certain that underneath this classic civilization, there coils a venomous serpent, whose sting is death to all progress, it were impossible to find an excuse for destroying their institution, and breaking up their long established usages. What a splendid but misguided woman that Miss Kate is. The love of such

a creature, to a man who could appreciate her, would be a greater blessing than mines of gold. What a fool was Claude Walsingham to leave such a treasure for the empty bauble of military fame, which is destined to burst in a shower of misfortunes upon his head, and leave him poorer than Lazarus. I wonder if she really loves him? and if he shall find faith in her, when he does return with a wooden leg, or an empty sleeve, or an open wound for her to nurse for life. But hark, she is coming."

"How did your mother take the news, and is she comfortable?" he asked of Miss Moore, for he had thought he heard the sound of weeping in the house.

"Mother is a true Southerner, sir, she was alarmed, and greatly shocked at first, but is quiet and resigned now. She told me to tell you that she is surprised that you should have sold yourself to the Northerners. She used to know your mother, and thought a great deal of her. She has not been strong for a long while, and I feared the shock would make her sick, but she bears it better than I imagined. What is it, sir, we cannot bear, for the sake of our dear country?"

"This has been an eventful day for you, Miss Moore, and you must have a pretty strong nerve to stand up to it," said Colonel Burton evasively.

"Ay, even beyond my calculations, sir. Our colored people are all gone from us. That was what papa went up to see your tyrannical general about. I wish now that he had staid at home, as it all did no good. Now, then, it only remains for me to know what disposition you will make of us, before our cup of misery will be full."

"I beg leave to assure you, Miss Moore, I have no disposition to be exacting; indeed I have no authority to make any. Instead of your being my captive, I am your prisoner tonight, and a pensioner on your hospitality. Let me, speaking candidly, also assure you that so far as in me is, I shall endeavor to render you such protection as lies in my power at all times. I fully estimate your unfortunate situation, and no one could deplore more than I do, the circumstances which compel me to be a participant in the affairs of this day. Feeling how you hate me, I do not blame you, nor do I require you to dissemble in the least your true sentiments. Nothing you shall do or say, shall have any bearing upon my conduct toward you, which shall be only that of a stranger, and a gentleman."

Such an expression of noble generosity touched the proud girl, and she was silent and reflective. Finally she said:

"Well, well, I know of but one course for us to pursue, Colonel, and that is to make a treaty offensive and defensive, the terms of which we shall discuss to-morrow. After so long a ride on your indifferent saddle, I am sure you will find repose agreeable. We will first repair to the dining-room, where I have prepared the tea, and after supper you may retire, if you can afford to trust your precious Union body under the roof of a rebel.

"Being a prisoner of yours, and subject to your orders, I have no other wish but to obey you," and so saying he followed her to the dining-room.

CHAPTER X.

A CONDITION OF QUASI-FRIENDSHIP ESTABLISHED.

"WHAT is it, Colonel Burton, that Shakespeare says makes cowards of us all?" remarked Kate Moore, as she and her guest reëntered the parlor after tea, and just prior to his departure for his room that night, at Moorefield. Evidently she was feeling better, for her tone was more cheerful, and she evinced a disposition to chat a while before retiring.

"I think it is conscience, Miss."

"Yes. I had forgotten, and it ran in my head it was misfortune."

"Why did you ask; and what relation does it bear upon the present state of affairs, Miss Moore?" inquired the Colonel, whose weariness did not dissuade him from leading her off into a protracted conversation.

"Oh, nothing, sir; only I was thinking how cowardly I was growing, and was asking myself the cause."

"Then it might have been your conscience, sure enough, Miss, since your sins have been without number, this afternoon," laughed the Colonel. "But you need not feel at all repentant, for I have forgiven you long ago."

"Well, whether it is conscience or misfortune, it doesn't matter. I am just going to make a convenience of you, Colonel Burton, and I want you to distinctly understand that if I seem to make any overtures, or soften in my manner toward you in the least, you are not to presume upon my friendship."

"That is to say, you intend to treat me as you do your dog. Pet me a little, but keep me in remembrance that I am a brute."

"Something like that, Colonel."

"You are a candid young lady, to be sure, and I have the advantage of having to fight an open enemy at all events."

"But you told me not to dissemble."

"Go on."

"You understand, sir, that since your kind and magnanimous general has taken our father first, and then our servants, we—mother and myself—are almost left in a destitute and unprotected condition. We have got to put ourselves under your protection or remain at the risk of being misused by your soldiers, or murdered and robbed by the negroes, when it is learned that we are living here alone. Such a proposition is intolerable to us, but a stern necessity which cannot be ignored. The only question is, do you accept the responsibility or do you scorn the subterfuge?"

"To a man, Miss Moore, my answer would be a gauntlet; to you it is this: I can easily forgive the insult of a proud woman who strikes back at the same time she sues for pardon. It's a woman's nature, you know, never to surrender. They always show fight to the last. For that reason I will obligate myself to become your protector, until such time as you cease to need my services. In the meantime, it would be very gratifying to me to have you regard me as a human being, flesh and blood, like unto your own father or brother. A slight difference of opinion ought not to make such a wide social gulf. It is a bad omen, for any cause, when its votaries use prejudice instead of reason in attempting to sustain it. Now, laying aside all other matters, Miss Moore, let me feel that you and your mother are trusting to my honor for protection, and I swear to you that a brother could not be more careful of you than I will be."

"All right, Colonel, so far so good. But how long shall my poor father have to languish in prison?"

"Ah, that is a different question, Miss Moore."

"But, can you not use your influence in his behalf?"

"As far as it will go. If Colonel Moore will only use a little discretion, he will be at liberty in a few days. Of course if he acts like a crazy man, and by disloyal conduct keeps the general in a state of constant irritation, he may not see Moorefield for a long time. If he is willing to come home and be quiet, I can obtain his release for you in less than three days; meantime I will keep you posted in regard to his health and comfort, and see that he is properly cared for."

"For once I thank you, sir, from the bottom of my heart."

That settled, she again resumed:

"Let me put one more question to you. Should some of our soldier boys run over to see us some of these nights, or the blockade runners come up here in the creek with letters for us, would you be hard with them, Colonel?"

"Not if I didn't catch them, Miss Moore. They must keep out of my way."

"But if I should place you into their hands and they should take you over to Richmond and hang you as a renegade?"

Colonel Burton laughed.

"I am willing to trust you, Miss Moore as to the betrayal, and the authorities at Richmond as to the hanging. So that matter is fixed. My only danger, I must tell you, lies not in that, but another direction. There are rebels at home, some who did not cross over into Dixie, whose arrows, like that of the Trojan hero, might strike me in a tender spot. My armor may be Hephæstian in construction, but my heart, like Achilles' heel, is by no means invulnerable."

But Miss Moore was, and the pleasant sally passed by without even drawing her fire. He went on:

"I am sure I should gain even the respect of my enemies, your best friends, by affording you protection. If Captain Walsingham himself were here, I do not think he would take opposite grounds."

"I should fear for you if he were. I think there is some old grudge between you. Is there not?"

"Really, Miss, we will not speak of that now."

"Your sister and he have always been good friends," she could not resist saying.

"I think so. At any rate, I know nothing to the contrary," was the curt reply. "Mary is almost as great a rebel as any of you," he added.

"And it's the only way for her to receive and merit the confidence and esteem of the best people of the country."

"Best people!" sarcastically retorted Colonel Burton, for the first time forgetting himself.

"When this little unpleasantness is over, I do hope we shall cease to hear of 'best families' in the sense it is used on the Eastern Shore. Do you know old Colonel Polk, Miss Moore?"

"I do, sir."

"You call him one of the best families, do you not?"

"I do."

"You remember how rotund and pompous he looks?"

"Yes."

"Now, mark me, and take notice, how thin and poverty-stricken he will appear by and by, when his negroes are all gone. Dress him up in plain fustian, and old Jimmy Tatum will look like a millionaire by the side of him. I abhor your first families made up of such stuff. I think we had better retire." Miss Moore's face was very red, and Colonel Burton was not in the best humor.

"One word more before you go to bed, Colonel, and that is in regard to our treaty. Instead of talking of it to-morrow, as we have sat up so long, we might as well finish to-night."

"Well, proceed."

"It is this. You are to see that our throats are not cut, our property not destroyed, our father released, and if any our friends are caught running the blockade—"

"I shall certainly not permit them to return. But have we not gone over that ground already?"

"Then I think we understand each other. All malice apart; but the old grudge stands good."

"Yes, you want to bind me to a woman's bargain, Miss Moore, I see. Well, I suppose you must have your own way. To your good sense, I leave the future disposition of your affairs, for they are in great part at your disposal."

"I shall do the best I know how, Colonel, but everything is so new and strange to me, I scarcely know how to act."

"It is eminently your duty, Miss, to conform yourself to the new condition of affairs as much as possible. The world is constantly moving into new spheres, and its inhabitants into new realms of thought. You must look ahead and keep up. Never mind the negroes; let them take care of themselves. You need not become a martyr. You may shun the hemlock, the gibbet, and the cross, but you may at least be politic and save yourself much worry of mind, and perhaps a great deal of physical and mental suffering. When the triumph passes by, you need not join the procession, but you certainly can keep from throwing yourself beneath the wheels of the conqueror's car. We who tread the stage of action to-day, are short-sighted if we can see no further ahead than the few years of the immediate present. Out of the throes of this national strife shall come forth a new era of prosperity—a quickening of the country's industries—the extent of which, even if we could behold only a tithe of its magnitude, would astonish us. Then shall all animosity be swallowed up in amnesty and reconciliation, and you and I, so long separated by caste, be good friends, equal in respectability, if equal in intellect and virtue, and the world forget

that Tom Burton the Abolitionist was once despised for his politics and religion."

"My goodness, Colonel, you talk like a preacher."

My father was a local preacher you know, and I suppose I am at last taking after him."

"I think you would do well to put off that uniform and take holy orders. It would become you much better. Once more I would suggest that we retire, and if you will take a glass of wine with me, we will, for the present, drink friends."

"I am forsworn. Never again will a drop of liquor, of any kind, enter my mouth, if I can help it. Twice in my life, to drown sorrow, I have indulged; and to-day have less to find fault of on the score of bad treatment, from my fellow-men, than injury received from strong drink. When the devil tempts men to oppress their fellows, he stands by with a glass of rum, to stupefy them; not that he may relieve them of the pain, but destroy their sensibility, and help them on to their ruin. I am not afraid of rebel bullets, but from rebel wine, please excuse me."

"Then your fear treachery?"

"By no means. On the contrary, if I should meet my fate in you, I could compliment myself on having a very sweet executioner."

"Silence, Colonel. You must not jest. Remember you are not to take any liberties. There must be no familiarity."

"Indeed, Miss, it is only a soldier's gallantry. If I have offended, I beg your pardon. You may listen to me some of these fine days."

"I will tell you when that may be, Colonel."

"Well?"

"When the South is conquered and all her brave soldiers slain; not till then."

"All right, Miss Moore, I shall bide my time, and upon that issue predicate my claim to your condescension.

"We shall both be very old."

"In experience I doubt not, but in years nothing to speak of. Meanwhile, as we have had rather a stormy day and have put into it much more than we expected, let us to bed and dream of better days to come. Good-night."

Colonel Burton retired. He found a comfortable bed well furnished with coverlets, a voluptuous feather-bed, and sheets of unblemished whiteness. Sleep waited not to be wooed, nor was the Union officer averse to her caresses. Stretching his tired limbs at full length upon his grateful couch, he passed into the oblivion of calm repose.

Meanwhile, Kate Moore, almost ready to succumb to the mental and physical strain occasioned by the day's excitement, was preparing to follow his example, when a low knocking at the back door of the house arrested her attention. She ran down stairs as quickly as possible, having recognized the signal, and putting her lips to the key-hole, inquired:

"Who is it?"

"Captain Evans, ma'am, with a billy doo for Miss Kate."

"Come in, but don't make a noise. There is a Union officer upstairs. When did you arrive, and is the Captain safe and sound in Dixie?"

"Yes, ma'am; he are as happy as a crab at high water, havin' lots of enjoyment with the Norfolk ladies, and jest a havin' the most excellent time you can remagine. Here is a letter he sent you."

"A thousand thanks, Captain. I am so glad to hear of your safe arrival. I suppose Claude is happy?"

"As happy as a man can well be, what has left his gal behind. Howsomever there is no lack ev' 'em over thar."

"What are the prospects, Captain, of peace?"

"Werry great, ma'am, werry great. France and England is about to recognize our independence, and as soon as that is recomplished it will all be over."

"I'm afraid you left in a hurry. The Captain's letter is very short and quite unsatisfactory," said Miss Moore, as she finished reading the note Captain Evans had handed her. Her unsatisfied look put the old salt on his guard.

"Oh, he war werry busy, ma'am. You must not jedge him too sewerely. And I did repart rather unceremoniously like. Don't doubt him, Miss, he are as true as the North Stair."

"When do you return, Captain?"

"To-morry night, ma'am. I wish it war to-night, ma'am."

"Why to-night?"

"Because I wouldn't mind takin' that Yankee you spoke across the bay with we uns. He would make dollars in my pocket, ma'am, and a right smart feather in my cap, eh?"

"But I couldn't allow you to take him, Captain. Papa is in jail and the negroes are all gone; so we need this man's services just now."

"So, I see. I know as how we uns hev to do things in those war times we uns don't relish much, but so it is. I don't suppose it will mix matters too much fer you to allow me stay with you uns; that is, ef you uns can recommodate me?"

"Oh, no. You may go up to the back-room, you know the

way. Don't make any extra noise. If he should discover you, I will try and pass you off for a neighbor. You see?"

"Never mind me, ma'am. I'm used to sich business.

"But where is Sammy?"

"He are gone to his mother's. I'm under werry many obligations to you, ma'am, fer your horsepetality. I shall be leavin' werry early in the mornin, and expect to cross over to-morry night. Should you hev anything to send the Captain, you know where the cunner lies. I suppose his blue-coated honor will hev reparted afore that time?"

"Oh, yes, he will go in the forenoon. You may expect me at the landing. Now, you had better retire. My horse ran away to-day, poor papa got locked up, and things have gone wrong generally. I am almost dead with weariness and excitement. Good-night."

Kate read her short note over and over again. It was so unlike Claude—so cold and formal that she, weak and run down as she was, could not resist a flood of hysterical tears. She threw the one small sheet of note-paper into the fast dying embers on the hearth, kissed her mother who was sleeping soundly and went to bed, never so unhappy in her life and never so hopeless.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FATE OF MOOREFIELD.

THE residence of Colonel Moore, the scene of the event related in the last chapter and part of the preceding one, was situated on the west side of the peninsula at the head of one of the many creeks which flow into the land from the Chesapeake. It was half a mile removed from the country road, an expansive lawn in front, with the negro quarters in the immediate rear; the barns and out-buildings in rear of those, and then the creek between which and the buildings last mentioned was a thick line or grove of pines separated from the barn-yard by a fence. A road ran from the rear of the house, down through the barn-yard to a gate which opened into the thicket. From this gate a dozen paces brought one to the creek where there was a deep hole and a landing-place for fishermen.

The next morning was crisp, clear, and bracing, a typical autumn day, not actually freezing, but what might be termed rimy.

The air, the steel-blue sky, the fields and the woods all combined to make up a landscape intensely Virginian. The season was not unlike its predecessors, nor were the natural objects just referred to; but the spirit of all things seemed to be new. There seemed to be abroad, in this fair land, some saddening influence which seemed to presage trouble of some sort, and nature, though clothed in her accustomed garb, did not give back that reassuring confidence she was wont to bestow upon her children in the days that were no more. A dead silence painful to realize, reigned supreme. There came no ring of the woodman's axe from the thicket, no bounding echo from the dense forest across the creek. The hunter's horn which on such mornings used to quiver on the ambient atmosphere, woke not the brakes and fens, nor did the silvery notes of the bugle or the deeper bay of the fox-hound resound in the thick wood. Not even a negro's cheery voice hymning his crude ideas in his cruder song could be heard on the big plantation; or a pickaninny's outcry about the quarters. No lowing cow or bleating sheep was left to give animation to the scene.

One lone old negro man hobbled across the yard at Moorefield. He had risen early and fed the two horses. There was nothing else to feed. The runaways had stampeded with everything they could lay their hands to, and Moorefield was left desolate.

Colonel Burton arose at eight o'clock, and while waiting for breakfast, strolled down through the rear houses to the thicket gate. The grove on the other side looked inviting, and he passed through, delighted with the odor of the cedars which grew plentifully among the pines. Following the path, he came to the landing, and stood gazing over into the water. A curious-looking object caught his eye. He changed his position and took a more careful scrutiny, discovering, to his astonishment, a canoe sunk in the bottom of the hole.

"Ah, ha," says he, "blockaders! I shall look after this traffic a little, and see if I cannot overhaul some of these fellows. It may pay in various ways. Besides, it will furnish a good excuse for frequent visits to Moorefield."

Colonel Burton cast his eyes around through the wood. A little way from where he stood was a mound-like heap of pine straw, piled up as if for carting. He approached it, removing a portion of the shatters. His curiosity was rewarded by the finding of three barrels of whisky, a number of packages of various shapes and sizes, and several mail bags. At that

moment he heard the old negro whistling through his broken teeth, near the gate. Thinking that perhaps the old fellow might be cognizant of the doings of the blockaders, he called him and interrogated him as to the merchandise and the canoe. The look of surprise depicted on the negro's face convinced the Colonel that Daniel was at the first of it.

"I 'specs dat whisky and dem odder tings 'long to de blockade men. Dey is berry brief in dese parts, and I tought I hyeard a fuss down here in de woods las' night. Ef I had a knowed all dis good whisky had a been lyin' down here I bet Dan'l 'd had some on it 'fore now."

"That's all right, Daniel. Now I've something to say to you. I have to go up to head-quarters this morning. You watch this stuff until I come back and you shall have some of the whisky—yes, a whole jug full."

"Golly, marster, you is berry kind. But 'sposen de blockaders come afore you do, and wants to take de stuff?"

"I shall try and return before they do. In that case you will take notice of all they do, and let me know when I get back."

"Yes, marster, dat I will, case I wants some of dis good liquor. I knows it's good, 'cause it wouldn't be kivered up in this manner ef it warnt. You hurry off, Marster Colonel, and git back as yearly as you kin, case dem blockade men'll be here 'fore de hen go to roost, sartin."

"That's all right, Daniel. Have you fed and groomed my horse?"

"Yes, Marster Colonel."

"Then go, put the bridle and saddle on him at once, and see that you tell no one about this whisky."

"Yes, Marster Colonel. You may 'pend on Dan'l ebbery time. Dat ar whiskey will come in so nice fur de holidays," muttered the old darkey to himself, as he went to catch the horse.

Returning to the mansion, Colonel Burton took his breakfast with the little family, promising to return in the afternoon and bring them news of Colonel Moore. He then took the reins from old Daniel and prepared to mount his horse.

"Dat am a good hoss, Marster Colonel. Please, sir, gib ole Dan'l a chaw ob tobacker?"

"I don't use it, Daniel, but if you will stay around here and take care of your old mistress and Miss Kate, cut their wood and make the fires, and keep an eye on that whisky out there in the woods, I will fetch you a pound of the best chewing tobacco you ever tasted. Do you hear?"

"Dat I does, Marster Colonel, and I jist tell you, white folks may allus 'pend on me. Dan'l knows whar his bread am buttered, and case de white folks allus take kere ob Dan'l, he gwine to take kere ob dem. Yes, Marster Colonel, you may surely 'pend on Dan'l. When you gwine to send ole marster home, sir ?"

"In a few days, I hope. Good-bye."

"God bless yer, Marster Colonel, make a hurry an' come back, sir."

As the day passed away the weather grew very much milder. The afternoon came and went, but Colonel Burton did not return, nothing occurred all day at Moorefield to disturb the quiet which had come over it.

A full moon rose into a cloudless sky at evening, and everything betokened a pleasant night. Uncle Daniel was missed at the house all day. He had been very industrious all morning, providing wood for the ladies and was very lively and talkative; but had suddenly disappeared about ten o'clock, leaving the impression with them, that he too had run away.

Captain Evans had much to attend to and did not arrive at the landing until dark. He found Sammy there, but in a state of the utmost trepidation.

"Why in thunder, Sammy, haven't you been a gittin' that cunner up. You stand thar a lookin' like onto a superannuated heron on one leg, awaitin' fer the tide to rise. Come, stir your stumps. I'm spectin' a lady passenger down here tonight and nothin' done."

Captain Evans had talked so rapidly, he had not noticed the condition of the boy who had been standing all the while with his mouth open and his jaws working, trying to find expression to something he had to say of the most weighty importance.

"O, uncle, we 'uns are diskivered!"

"What?"

"We uns are diskivered!"

"General Jackson and Pocahontas! what do you mean?"

"The woods is full ev 'em, uncle."

"Full of what, you 'tarnal fool?"

"Full ev dogs and niggers, sir. Jest you come this way."

They started in direction of the merchandise. The old man thought he heard an unusual noise, and stopped to listen.

"By the livin', Sammy, I think I do hear somethin'." But Captain Evans was not a man to be bluffed by trifles, and picking up a stick of wood he went on, followed by the trembling youth.

When they had come within a few rods of the place where the contraband goods were piled, they were accosted by the voice of a man, saying:

"Who comes dare?" Captain Evans was too well versed in negro jargon to be mistaken in the character of the speaker, and his suspicions were confirmed when a little stumped-tail dog ran out towards the new-comers and began to bark.

"Why, Sammy, it's nobody but old Daniel, come on and don't be afeered ev your shadow."

"Is dat you, Mârster Captain Evans?"

"Yes, and what in thunder are you doin' here, you black imp?"

"I is a watchin' de whisky, sir, I tought de Yankees mought come and tote it away, sir."

"You're a lyin' hypercritical scoundrel. You are stealing it!" roared the irate blockader kicking over the old negro who had in truth been sampling one of the barrels.

"Get you gone, yer impercunerous old thief. Ef I ever catch you stealing ev my goods agin I'll hang yer up to a sapplin. Come, Sammy, ketch hold here, and roll these bar'ls down to the landin whilst I raise the cunner. It's time we uns was a gittin' away from here."

Daniel was on his knees in the attitude of supplication.

"'Fore my Heavenly Marster—"

"Git up from thar, you sancterfied villain, and help the boy load up these things. Lend a hand here, I say." The application of another kick sent the old negro over on his beam-end, but without waiting for the stimulus of a third, he seized a barrel and he and the boy hurried the goods to the landing, while the captain went into the water and pulled out the boat.

"Hurry up, Sammy. See that the gimlet hole is stopped up whar that old thief ware a drawin out the whisky. Put all the boxes in and run up arter the mail at the house."

By this time a lady, deeply veiled, had reached the landing, coming down from another direction. Captain Evans saluted her, going on with his work.

Sammy had not gone far before he met Miss Kate Moore coming down to the creek.

"You must excuse my haste, ladies," he said to the two ladies who were standing near each other, as he pulled off his rubber boots and turned to assist Sammy and the negro. "We uns is late and in a dreadful hurry. Jest hand your letters to that boy. He'll take care ev' em."

Miss Moore ventured to address the stranger.

"Are you not afraid to cross the bay in so small a craft?"

"Oh, no. I can trust myself to the care of the Captain. He is cautious and trustworthy I am told."

"Pardon me, are you from far?"

"Circumstances will not allow me to be communicative," replied the other in a voice not at all familiar to Miss Moore.

"I do hope you will have a pleasant night and a safe voyage," she added.

"Thank you."

"All aboard, Sammy?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Then jump in. And you, Miss, you sit right down here next to me. Right thar. Good-bye, Miss Kate. And you, Dan'l-in-the-lions'-den, ef you go and blow about this and the Yankees git wind ev my business, I will be the death ev you. Shove her off, Sammy."

Daniel was gone. So was Captain Evans. Kate stood on the shore and watched them sail away. The evening was pleasant and she lingered there until the sail of the canoe was hidden out of sight by a turn in the creek. She turned to go when her dog came bounding down to the place looking for her, and expressing great joy at having found her. She patted him on the head, saying:

"My only friend. Did you think your mistress had gone across the bay, Rover? Come, my pet, we will go back. There is no one in the house with mother, and Colonel Burton may come to tell us something about papa. Come, Rover."

The moon had risen over the tops of the houses, and was shining through the trees. The dog went on ahead, but suddenly turned and came back as if frightened. Kate did not pay any special attention to his movements, thinking that Daniel might be waiting for her in the thicket. He came up to her and she patted him again and went on, the brute walking by her side.

Presently the animal stopped and began to growl.

"What is it, Rover?" she asked, beginning to feel unpleasantly at the dog's conduct. She quickened her footsteps, and had reached the middle of the wood, when a slender sapling suddenly bent down across the narrow path in front of her, and leaping from its boughs as supple as a cat, old Susie the witch planted herself directly in her way. The dog, frightened, uttered a howl, and ran through the

thicket as if he had seen an apparition. Kate was not superstitious. She knew it was common to ascribe occult powers to old negro women, but had always held such an idea in ridicule, and left such nonsense to the uneducated; but there was something in the frightful face of this old hag, in her saucy effrontery and menacing attitudes that not only alarmed her, but deprived her of all control of herself. The action of her faithful dog was not calculated to reassure her, and left there alone to confront the hideous old witch, was a trial too sudden and unlooked for, for one in her weak and nervous condition to overcome. With a grimace that was ghostly or rather devilish, in the moonlight, and her red eyelids blinking, and white balls rolling in their sockets, the old woman peered into Kate's face, as she did so, chanting:

"For de year ob Jubelo am come,
An' de niggars dey are a marchin' home."

Kate's first thought was to fly, but there was for her no way of escape but in the rear, and she did not care to go further away from home. The path was narrow, and the small pines grew close on either side. While she stood irresolute, the old witch came nearer and took hold of her skirt, leering at her in the most diabolical manner. Kate thought she would die right there. She screamed with all her might. Only the echo of her own voice ringing through the woods, and up and down the creek shore, came back to her. The old witch laughed like a maniac, let go her hold of Kate's dress, and danced a jig in the path.

An owl flitted close by Kate's head, and, lighting near by, set up a doleful screech. She could not stand the pressure any longer. With a single bound she rushed upon the old woman, knocking her down and trampling upon her as she ran. Breathless she reached the gate, but a sight more appalling still, burst upon her frantic vision. Brighter than the full moon, brighter than the noon-day, there rose before her the glare of an awful conflagration. The whole east was illuminated. Tongues of fire leaped up toward the sky and kissed out the stars.

The mansion was ablaze! But one thought took possession of her mind. All else was forgotten. It was her mother. She heard not the exultant chuckle of the old witch behind her. How, or when, she reached the scene of the fire, she never knew. A number of soldiers were running here and there, trying in vain to save the house. She realized the aw-

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ful truth, that her mother was yet in the burning building. She essayed to throw herself into the roaring flames, but was caught by a strong arm and borne away to the negroes' quarters.

It was Colonel Burton who had rescued her; but she knew it not. She knew nothing. A bed of overcoats was made for her, and, placing her inanimate form upon it, the gallant officer sat down to watch by her side, while the fire-fiend, careering in his might, roared and raved around the falling roof-tree of her dear old home, until it licked up the last vestige of house, and mother, and all!

PART III.

CHAPTER XII.

OSTRACISM.

LORD MACAULAY has said that a man who will die at the stake for his religion, will not hesitate to consign his dissenting brother to the same fate. The idea is the historian's, the words ours.

Coming from a Conservative, such a thought has no little significance; and, taken in its most mollifying sense, can have no other meaning but that radicalism, if not really aggressive, is uncompromising and stubborn. The Burton family was one of that unyielding sort, having come down unchanged from the days of Cromwell, unconquered and unconquerable.

The father of Tom and Mary Burton had been a turbulent man in his day and generation. Not aggressively so, but like a rock in the midst of an angry ocean, which, while it is motionless itself, throws back the wild billows that dash against it, one upon another, making the sea white with the foam of a fierce but fruitless onslaught.

Austere in his demeanor, fixed in his principles, and stern in his integrity, he had stood his ground through all opposition, and presented against the political persecutions of his times, a front so bold that no one could be found with sufficient temerity to attempt to dislodge him. A Methodist of the Methodists, an Emancipationist, out and out, freeing his

negroes as fast as they arrived at the age of twenty-one, and a Unionist to the core, old man Burton preached, lived and died in a community that sneered at his religion, cursed him for his abolitionism and hated him for his patriotism.

His two children inherited only to a limited degree the stalwart qualities of their sire, and these had been somewhat modified by the associations of their youth.

Tom was more like his father than Mary ; and under different treatment than he had received from his neighbors, would probably have been a preacher. The girl, on the other hand, had taken all her father's sunshine (surely he had some), and all her mother's gentleness. Her whole nature was imbued with a religious fervor; but an enthusiasm which had in it not one single spark of superstition, or fanaticism. Environed by pleasant, and agreeable surroundings, such a disposition would have culminated in a character as serene and placid as a lake in summer. But alas ! such an environment was not to be hers. Instead of sunshine, she knew nothing but storm. Instead of joy, nothing but sorrow. A few days of school-life, themselves burdensome because of ostracism and neglect, and Mary's life from girlhood had been one continued scene of struggle and oppression. No wonder that she relapsed into a condition of melancholy, in which a practiced eye might have discerned the lurkings of danger to both soul and body.

No one can contemplate such a wreck of moral character—a wreck, not in the sense of depravity, but a wreck in the crippling, maiming, and curbing of all that might have been useful, and ornamental, from a religious point of view, without feelings of regret, any more than that of intense indignation against those by whose machinations such a wrong was perpetrated. Her faith would have been practical, her religion an every-day religion. Whatever there might be in a strictly Christian life which demoralized the co-ordinate factors of the social structures or marred the symmetry of a well ordered system of social ethics, she would have discarded as unworthy of a classification among the Christian virtues. She would thus have been what every good Christian ought to be: charitable, unsectarian, undogmatic, willing to accept from all the creeds that which is human, and Christlike ; rejecting all that is artificial, unnatural and unlike the teachings of the Master. Her religion was of a sort that did not dehumanize, unsex or craze. Such a faith makes humanity more human, beauty more beautiful, mind and body lovely in association, more brilliant in intercourse. As art denudes

and beautifies what a false and prurient modesty conceals, the one subjugating the baser passions by an appeal to all that is honorable and chaste—the other inviting lust by a lack of confidence in its own virtue—so a religion like Mary's might have been is one that carries the sweets of human experience in one hand, and the blessings of God in the other. But as passing clouds cast shadows on the mountain sides, changing bright colors of the variegated heath, so the untoward surroundings of Mary Burton's life had colored all her character; darkening the secular, without illuminating the pious side of it.

These are not moralizings. They are facts thrown out that the reader may find an apology to offer—an excuse to mitigate, and temper judgment in passing upon the conduct of one who thus far has figured in these pages as one of its brightest and fairest characters.

"You will see, Tom," she remarked to her brother, "when the war is over the Union people will be hated just as much by Southerners as they are now. It will take at least fifty years for this prejudice to wear out, if it does then. All my old associates treat me with contempt. The girls of Miss Blake's school, even Miss Blake herself, passes me by with scarcely a sign of recognition. Of course, I do not mention this complainingly, or as showing any lack of womanly courage; but, Tom, it is too hard to live and die shut out from all society, with no standing whatever in one's own county."

"I admit all that, Mary; but let us cling to the right if we die for it. Besides, we shall see a change. If we make good use of this, the flood-tide of our prosperity, we shall not always lie at the bottom. A steady, consistent course, competency, and protection, will win for us, by and by, all we deserve. For us to act otherwise, would call our dear old father from his grave, to repudiate and disown us. We shall have money and true respectability. What more need we care for?"

"Alas, dear Tom, it is not within the reach of money to make a woman happy. Our sex is made up of pride, ambition and vanity. Without the recognition of our neighbors we cannot enter into society. Without an entrance into society, we have no chance to gratify any of those desires which I have mentioned. Why, don't you know, that it would do a woman no good, be she married or single, to have the richest dress, or finest embroidered petticoat, if she could not show it to some other woman, and talk about it?"

"Indeed, Mary, you are growing very worldly-minded. I fear you are thinking of backsliding, my girl."

"No, dear Tom, I am only looking at the dark side of the question this morning. By the by, to change the subject, how is Miss Moore?"

"She is getting on; bitter as ever, insulting as ever."

"Yes, we heard you had quite an excursion with her yesterday."

"I only left her this morning. Shall see her again this evening."

"It would appear from your frequent visits that there was some attraction at Moorefield for you."

"There is; but whether it is Miss Kate or no, I leave that for you to find out."

"She was as correct and faultless a girl at school as I ever saw; only a little reserved in her manners, which I do not think resulted from any silly pride, but the manner of her bringing up. She is Claude Walsingham's affianced, you know?"

"Yes."

"I suppose she is handsome as ever?"

"She is not homely. However, if the old saying is true, that 'Beauty is as beauty does,' I don't think I've seen her at her best."

"You stayed at her father's house last night?"

"Yes. I suppose that is all over the county by this time. One has only to think of anything nowadays to publish it."

"Well, Tom, treat her well. She is a good girl, and I am sorry we should be estranged."

It was this estrangement business that was killing Mary. It was ever boring at her sensitive heart, sapping her life springs. This is why she was sad—a sadness which did not depart from her when Colonel Burton left her to proceed on his way to head-quarters that morning, after leaving Moorefield.

He had found his sister ill at ease, and suffering from mental depression; and although he succeeded in arousing in her sufficient interest to converse, still, to talk had seemed to be an effort. Mrs. Mason said that she knew her neice was ill—that her brother ought to take her away from the Shore, to New York or Baltimore. She needed mental recreation. The Colonel, before leaving, promised his aunt to consider the matter, though he was not very deeply impressed with the idea.

If he had known how the little frail girl was suffering, he would not have left so carelessly that morning, nor would his head have been quite so full of blockaders and Moorefield.

Captain Evans and all his contraband goods might have gone to Dixie or the bottom of the bay, for all he would have cared just then.

Whether he was blinder than he might have been, or Mary too guarded for him to read her intentions, certain it is, that for many a long day he did not forgive himself for the preoccupation of mind which caused him to neglect his sister, who, he could see, now it was too late, was dying even then for that sympathy and love her nature so necessarily demanded.

When Mrs. Mason went to the young girl's chamber the next day, to call her to breakfast, after an unusual indulgence in her morning nap, she found her bed untouched, her room in perfect order, but its former occupant gone!

A letter was lying on a bureau in the room, addressed to Colonel Burton which told a tale too painful for utterance. It ran thus:—

"COLONEL THOMAS BURTON.

"My dear Brother:

"When you left Whitemarsh to-day, I felt that a sense of duty, would finally compel me to disclose to you my intentions. I managed, however, to master my feelings, and this note will convey to you what I tried in vain to find courage to personally impart. How you will feel toward me when you come to miss me I cannot divine.

"That it will cause you to forever lose faith in everything, I very much fear. I pray God it may, at least, not drive you into infidelity, or impair your confidence in the consolations of religion, or the ultimate good results of a Christian education. You must learn, my dear Tom, to look upon me as an exception to all the rules which apply to ordinary girls, and learn to judge of me as one entitled to charity's largest indulgence.

"The tension to which I have been mentally subjected has, I fear, almost dethroned discretion if not judgment: many will now say intellect also.

"I know you will have patience to listen to me, even if you cannot find it in your heart to condone my offense.

"Cut off from all society, as you know I have been, my mind has run much of late upon religious subjects and fostered only too well, the desire, perhaps always latent in me, to seek rest from the woes which have so long oppressed me.

"There is a limit to human endurance, to patience and even to hope. A time when life holds out no longer the torch that stimulates us to perseverance, or, if the torch still burns, hu-

man strength fails us, and we sink, like poor Leander, unable to buffet the tide. At such a time we fail to find solace even in prayer, and all we care for or desire is to fly away and be at peace. Such a condition, when it takes entire possession of us, stimulates us to deeds of desperation and strengthens us to face death and become resigned to it.

"Resistlessly, O brother, that hour has come to your poor suffering sister, and I bid you and all that was once so near and dear to me, a long farewell.

"And why, my dear Tom, should we wish to live in this unfriendly world? With an imbittered past, a present full of turmoil and a future without promise, what compensation does life hold out for its cares, its pains and its toils?

"When this cruel war is over, be its end in favor of the Federal or Confederate cause, it will make no difference to us. Neither armed soldiers to protect, nor gold to buy earth's treasures can make people love us. The stigma of Abolitionism will burn into our souls forever.

"Should the South win, as it appears to me now, it will, a fate worse even than death awaits us. Better for us to perish now, than live and bear the taunts and insults of a people who will always hate us whether they or we be the conquerors.

"But why prolong this agony? It may seem very hard and unnatural to you for me to write so apparently without feeling, upon a matter so painfully serious, but it is best for me to command my emotions, and I am trying so to do; still harder than all the rest, is it for me to part with you in this manner.

"O, my brother, what sad fatality seems to follow us in that, just as Heaven has given you back to me reclaimed and clothed in all your noble manhood, we must part again. With no one but me to call you brother, needing the tender ministrations and support of some warm heart, it seems too cruel to leave you.

"Will you not forgive me? And though we meet no more on earth may we meet in a better and brighter world on high, where the tumult of strife shall cease forever and ostracism be unknown.

"Once more I bid you, and all the family at Whitemarsh, a fond farewell.

"MARY."

A slipper, such as she wore every day, her bonnet and shawl picked up on the bay shore as if washed up on the beach, furnished all the clue her stunned and bereft relatives could ob-

tain, as to what manner the poor girl had escaped from her sorrows and found her ease at last, in the arms of Lethe. For days Colonel Burton was like one in a stupor. He shut himself up in his room at the court-house and did not go out for a week. When he did appear, however, at the head of his regiment, paler and calmer than before, his soldiers remarked a sterner determination than usual in his somewhat hardened countenance and knew that he longed to cool in battle the fever of revenge that was burning in his heart.

CHAPTER XIII.

GONE, CLEAN GONE.

CLAUDE WALSINGHAM was assigned to duty on the staff of General Huger with head-quarters at Norfolk.

Since the battle of Bull Run, on the 21st of July, there had been but very little of importance done in the way of fighting in the East. Both sides were busily recruiting and making ready for the various movements which were to be made on the checker-board of war in the coming spring.

McClellan was still at Washington and Johnston at Manassas.

The Confederates were fortifying Roanoke Island and other points along the Southern coast, and the Federals at their rendezvous at Fortress Monroe, gathering together their fleets to capture those very same defenses. At Norfolk, everything was quiet so far as the alarms of war were concerned; its debauched and heterogeneous population being only now and then awakened from their Belshazzar-like feast by a stray shot from some venturesome gun-boat, or the big cannon at the Rip Raps.

The Christmas holidays gave a week of renewed hilarity and dissipation. Fireworks, balls, fairs, duels and what-nots were the order of the day. Many disturbances occurred and much disorder prevailed, on account of the lawless conduct of the soldiers during this time, or the incompetency or unwillingness of the military authorities to preserve the peace.

But while the genéral glow of excitement was sufficient to satisfy the most reckless and dissipated warrior, there was a class of pleasure-seekers who were in the doldrums, chagrined and disappointed. Suddenly, and without an excuse save that she had found at last a single heart to confide in, and a single

arm to rest upon, Miss Buttercup had closed the doors of her salon to the shoulder-strap gentry and instead of the weekly soirées at her house to which they had been accustomed to look forward with so much pleasure, there ceased to come to 229, a single invitation; and that favored source of conviviality was peremptorily cut off for the season.

The fair enchantress had gone into seclusion, taking Claude with her. She appeared at the operas, it is true, and was seen often on the street, at reviews and other public places, but never without Captain Walsingham.

Sometimes they walked out Church Street into the country, at others strolled through the well-kept grounds of the marine hospital or roamed amid the magnolia groves which bordered the western part of the city. Military society was nonplussed. Unfledged captains and clodhopper lieutenants were relegated to the slums of Nebraska Street. They had nowhere else to go. Disappointment led to vituperation. Green-eyed jealousy began to stalk abroad, and the flippant tongue of scandal to wag.

They said that Claude Walsingham was throwing himself away. Was he not closeted with the woman every night? Did he not neglect his duties for her? A thousand and one stories were afloat about him and her; until at length his friends began to look coldly upon him and to cut him, and he to return the compliment. Frequent quarrels occurred at 229, growing out of insinuations, innuendoes, and various remarks of the kind in connection with Claude's attentions to the lady in question, and peace no longer reigned in the once delightful boarding-house.

There is one personage who is invincible. All the kings and all the generals, with all their appliances and forces, are futile when arrayed against her. Blockades are wholly ineffective. Cordons of fortifications cannot for a moment delay her progress. She is Madam Rumor. She travels afoot, on horseback, and by steam. She walks the earth, flies through the air and travels underground. Fast or slow, high or low, she is bound to get there.

It was only a diversion for her to step over from Norfolk to the Eastern Shore. Blockade runners were often captured and imprisoned, but Madam Rumor always escaped, and the further she went the more she knew. The people of the Eastern Shore knew ten times as much about Claude Walsingham and Miss Buttercup as the denizens of Norfolk, and they pretended to know enough to sink any two poor human beings into the lowest depths of perdition.

It was a surprise to every body that Miss Buttercup, who was indeed and in truth a woman of the world, so given to vanity, ambition, and pleasure, should find in Claude—in other words, should find in any one man—that satisfying portion to which it had heretofore taken a whole world to contribute. True, Claude was young and handsome, educated and refined, and, what was equally essential, in possession of some ready cash and drawing good pay; but how long would all these things last a woman like Miss Buttercup? "She will treat him as she has treated others," said knowing ones to the manner born. "He is a great fool to be caught in her net," said another. "He is a faithless poltroon," said some of his Eastern Shore friends who knew of his engagement to Miss Moore. And so they talked. And in fact his conduct was quite as inexplicable. Was he not risking too much? Would he not lose caste in the army? He had a bright future before him if the war continued. The path of glory stretched out invitingly. Would he spurn all these things, and, turning from the god of war, pay all his devotion at the shrine of Hymen? Would the Apollo-like brow with the locks of Jove be placed supinely in the lap of his Circe, while the Sybarites ravaged his country and destroyed her liberties with her loved institutions?

But did neither of them have respect for the rights of poor Kate Moore? Not she, surely, for had she not said that every thing was fair in love and war? Does ever one vain and wicked woman suffer any abuse of conscience in proselyting a man's heart from the object of his first adoration? Does she not always exult in the conquest? There are some courtesans, even, who have respect unto the rights of a married woman, but what single woman, seeking a husband, cares for or questions the relations growing out of a mere engagement?

The fact is, a woman flying the matrimonial flag is a freebooter. She carries letters of marque and reprisal, and woe be unto the merchandise of faith which another ventures to freight in the heart of her betrothed. Am I too severe? If so, forgive me, for such has been my experience.

Alas! to tell the truth, we very much fear that Miss Buttercup, in her profession, was a regular Captain Kidd, as ready to rob poor Miss Kate Moore of Claude, as a buccaneer to rifle a merchantman and then make the crew walk a plank into the ocean. But lest we do her injustice by innuendo, let us go on and look for facts, a course which will, no doubt, prove more creditable to the writer and more interesting to the reader.

It had only been a fortnight since Captain Evans had returned to the Eastern Shore with his bags full of letters and his pockets full of Confederate scrip, when Claude Walsingham was found intoxicated on the street, and taken to the guard-house. The circumstance was a shock to his friends, and caused no little talk in military circles. But as it was his first offense, and a thing of daily occurrence at that time and place, very little notice was taken of it authoritatively, and no report made to the general commanding.

For several days afterward, Claude conducted himself with more circumspection, but did not relax, in the least, his attentions to the siren of Freemason Street. His friends admonished him, but in vain. He knew his own business, and managed his own affairs, and begged that other people would do the same. In this way the short month of the nativity waned to its close. The season was unusually severe for the climate, and again it was snowing.

The old borough was wrapped in a mantle of soft white, for snow in Virginia is softer, and if possible whiter, than it is in Northern States, owing, no doubt, at that time, to the fact of an atmosphere less impregnated with coal dust, and, as the evening advanced and the street lamps were lighted, the city took upon herself the appearance of fairyland; while the invigorating effects of the weather, combined with the novelty of the scene, gave to municipal life an activity and charm that was exhilarating, and a new impetus to the romping populace.

What if grim-visaged Janus did stand at the door? What if, just a few miles down the river, the dogs of war lay in their kennels, ready to be unleashed?

"Let us make merry," they said, "for to-morrow we die."

In the mellow, tinseled glow of that winter night, Claude Walsingham walked through a crowded, bustling street, to the more ruddy and comfortable parlors of Miss Buttercup, gorgeous in velvet and satin, and filled with that subtle aroma which surrounded her, with scarcely a thought of Kate Moore, or country, or even honor.

The fascinating woman met him in all her bewitching radiance. Not attired as on the night of his first visit, but in a black silk skirt, velvet jacket, gold lace trimmings, and open vest. There was something in the tight-fitting basque that gave to her matured form a voluptuousness that would have furnished a model for the masters. The bust of a Venus was enclosed in a corsage that conformed exquisitely to its proportions. It was impossible to look upon Miss Buttercup without admiring her.

"Welcome, my dear Captain," she exclaimed, as Claude entered the salon. "I am glad you thought enough of me to brave the snow-storm. My mind has been running on you all day. I should have been so disappointed had you not come. Assist me with the *tête-à-tête*. We will draw it before the grate and, while it storms without, sweet peace shall reign within. The front door is barricaded, and with no one to disturb us, what shall prevent an evening of unalloyed happiness?"

"Nothing but capacity on my part to take it all in, thou dispenser of heaven-born joys! Let me invoke thy mercy as little boys do who dip their fingers in the water they are about to bathe in, and make with it a sign of the cross, lest they drown in the very element that is to afford them so much pleasure. Let me taste a little of what is in store for me, lest I die in that day when thou shalt prove all gracious and I may drink my fill of love;" and, saying this, he drew her to his breast and kissed her. Miss Buttercup did not resist, but with burning cheeks said:

"There; you think you are highly privileged, Captain Walsingham, do you?"

"Indeed, my darling, I almost doubt my existence when I think of my good fortune and your great condescension. I deem myself the most favored man alive."

"The world is large, Captain, and contains a great many people, and a person in society has to meet a very great variety of characters. It has been my lot to have many admirers, but if I have, out of that number, chosen you to be my particular friend, what business is it for any one to make remarks? Are we not both free, white, and twenty-one?"

Claude winced, feeling a sort of damper to his ardor at the mention of the word "free," but a glance at the radiant face by his side reassured him.

"Such charms as yours, my own dear one, are enough to break any bonds. Alas! I feel that to sever my heart from the ties which bind me to you now, would tear my heart out by the roots."

"Then it should be the last of your thoughts to do such a rash act, my dear Captain. I trust you will not attempt such a wicked thing."

"True, dearest; and I never intend to."

Her small smooth hand with its tapering fingers and pink nails, lay on her lap as if nestling in the folds of her rich dress. Its outlines may be seen to-day in that of the "Coquette," which stands in the Metropolitan Art Gallery,

in the Central Park, of the city of New York. And what a hand! Claude took it in his own and pressed it to his lips.

"Whoever wins this is more than a conqueror," he added.

"Suppose I should tell you that it was already won, that there only remained the formal delivery of it to the gallant knight to whom it has been surrendered? What would you say?"

Claude was startled.

"If such be the case, spare me the pain of telling me. Do not extinguish with one blow the fond conceit I have cherished in my presumptuous heart, that I might aspire to its conquest. By Heaven! I could not survive and see it in another's possession."

"But if I should say that he who holds it now is rightful owner, and is but entitled to his own?"

"My cup of joy would run over. I should have no wish ungratified. May I so interpret your meaning?"

"Would you be true and constant? Would you sacrifice every thing for me?"

"Every thing!" exclaimed Claude, intoxicated with passionate delight. "Speak, darling, and make me happy forever."

"Do not be too much excited, my dear boy. Don't you know that those people who eat rapidly do not enjoy their meals. This is a coarse figure to be sure, but the more practical the better understood. When you have grown calmer you can better appreciate your victory and enjoy your repast. In the rush of passion, pleasure is run over and abused. Let us go slowly that we may digest as we go. Forego, my dear fellow, a little enjoyment to-night, that you may revel in a sea of bliss in the near future."

"Did you not hold out a flag of truce, my own darling, I should this moment storm the citadel."

"Be not so rash, my gallant Captain. There is virtue in patience."

"But, my precious one, in this case procrastination is agony. I live as in a dungeon, a wretched prisoner bound down by galling chains till you shall set me free."

"In that case, my dear Captain, I must confess to a like condition. But, following the example of the belligerents who, you know, have at last now come to terms, I shall see that in a few days we have a cartel for the exchange of prisoners. After which we will declare the war ended, and all I have and am shall be at your command. Does this satisfy you?"

"Admirable woman! You make even delay tolerable by

your wonderful tact, and whet the edge of anticipation by the fullness of the promises you make. I could wait for such a consummation a lifetime, and live on the joy which antedates it."

"There, Captain, you have said enough. Your devotion is only equaled by your extravagances. And since nothing is finished without a sacrament, let us seal the pledges we have made to-night by consecrating to Bacchus."

So saying she arose and went and brought a bottle of wine, which Claude uncorked; and they mingled the mystic rites of love with the fumes of alcohol, till surfeited with both they reluctantly separated long after the hours of midnight, and again Claude Walsingham reeled home to his boarding-house doubly intoxicated, and raised to the third Heaven of an ecstatic hallucination.

He went to bed in a sort of dazed stupor, and slept like a log until ten o'clock the next day.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

THE human passion we denominate Love, not unfrequently comes to us like the quickening impulses of human life. Without the slightest perceptible warning, save the flutter of a quivering wing, Cupid, like a terror-stricken dove, homes himself in the unsuspecting heart, and by some occult power of his, transforms us in a moment. Not only are we ourselves recreated, but the whole universe has undergone, to us at least, a metamorphosis so absolute, that we can never look abroad again with the same feelings we did before. In some such way the feeling came to Captain Evans' nephew that night after they had left the landing at Moorefield with the unknown lady passenger bound for the Western Shore.

It came about in this way: Impressed with the idea that his merchandise had been discovered, the wary old boatman made all haste to put as much space of land and water, but especially the latter, between himself and the Yankee scouts as possible. While the grand pyrotechnic display was going on at Moorefield, adding its horrors to the strange events of the disjointed times, the voyagers were pressing on with all their might toward the mouth of the creek.

In its tortuous passage to the bay, this stream was, in cer

tain places, very narrrow and quite overlapped with pine and cedar trees, little swept by any wind that might blow. To get out of such a place in a hurry could be accomplished only by dint of rowing and paddling, of which enjoyable recreation Captain Evans and his nephew were taking their fill, when suddenly, at a point near the mouth of the stream, the tide being low, the flying craft struck a sand-bar and "took up," throwing Sammy flat on his back in the bottom of the canoe, and Captain Evans, who was steering, almost over the head of the lady. Overboard, at the command of the irate captain, went both he and the boy, and if ever human energy was employed to its greatest capacity to effect an object, it was expended here in this case. But all in vain, the canoe would not stir.

"This is very misfortionable," said Captain Evans, raising himself up with his hand to his back. "It are still ebb tide, and we uns will hev to lie here ontil mornin'. Somethin' has got to be done with the cunner and things, or we uns moight git kotched."

"And the young lady, uncle; what shall we do with her," whispered the boy, brushing the perspiration from his brow, as they stood on the bank looking doubtfully at the sulky boat.

"Hain't it easy enuff, you dummy, to hide her in the woods, like a cow does her calf at milkin' time? She's got legs, and she kin walk. But that old cunner can't git up and go like onto a Christian, you know, nor them goods ether."

"That remark ev yourn is true enuff, uncle, but I'll tell you what we can do," said Sammy bristling with the fertility of his inventive genius. The old captain thought any suggestion in such an exigency worth considering, no matter the source, so he eagerly inquired, in better humor:

"Well, what is that, my son?"

"We can take the things outen her and sink her." Captain Evans' disgust was poorly expressed in his reply.

"You tarnation fool! Don't you see she is sunk already as low as she kin git. I believe, my soul, the older you git the bigger fool you git. Ef you hev got enny plan to offer your poor old uncle to fotch him outen this scrape, why don't you do so, and not stand thar a suggestin' your unpractical propositions?"

Sammy, who was not much given to loquacity, was awed into respectful silence, as much by the high-sounding words as the wrath of his vexed kinsman.

"No. I'll tell you jist what we uns hev got to do with that cunner," he continued, musingly.

"What is that, uncle?"

"Why, jist let her lie right thar. The banks ev the creek is high, and the tide bein' low, she will be concealed from view. We uns will trow some pine bushes over her and take to the woods ourselves, and wait till mornin'."

"But the young lady, uncle?"

"Gineral Jackson and Pocahontas, Sammy! Will you go crazy about the young woman? Don't you remagine I kin look out fer her?"

Sammy again collapsed.

"Howsomever, as long as you wants to be a doin' somethin' fer the young lady, you kin wade in thar and fotch out them overcoats and that buffalo-robe, and take and make a sort ev shelter under the bushes for the young un, so she kin cotch a nap thar in the woods. It are gettin' right smart cold, and I presume she is not werry comfurtable cooped up thar in the cunner like onto a possum in a gum."

If it had been daytime, Captain Evans might have seen Sammy's face blossom into a smile as bland as summer-time, as he made haste to carry into effect the commands of his superior, who, by this time, had turned his back and gone sauntering into the forest.

With the alacrity of one who delights in his job, Sammy went to work and made a cosy bower under the cedar bushes, with the aid of pine boughs and shatters, where he spread the robe, leaving the overcoats for covering. But now, when all was ready, the most difficult part of the problem presented itself. How was he to get her out of the canoe? There was yet some water running down stream, and it would not do to have the delicate passenger wade out to the shore. Her feet would be cold all night if wetted now.

"I wish uncle war here this very minnit," thought the boy in his dilemma.

He did not know how to act. He was too diffident to offer his services; although the pleasure of clasping, that delectable little form in his arms, would be a pleasure beyond his most extravagant calculations.

Necessity is not only the parent of invention, but the vanquisher of obstacles both imaginary and real, so Sammy could do nothing else but wade out to the boat and stammer:

"I hev restructed a nice place fer you out thar in the bushes, Miss, and you kin now go ashore if you likes to."

The young lady stood up, and surveying the difficulty, answered:

"But how am I to get there, Sammy?"

"Indeed, Miss, I can't say, unless you permit me to take you thar," stammered Sammy.

"But you cannot carry me so far, can you?"

"I can tote you to the beach on t'other side ev the county, Miss," said the boy, urging his proposition with increasing confidence. "Ef I was goin' to the moon I could tote you all the way, Miss."

"Well, then, I suppose you will have to try. Don't drop me, Sammy."

"Don't drap you! No, Miss. Your mammy never rocked you in the cradle safer nor I will carry you," he assured her, as he, trembling, placed his arms about her slender body, fumbling awkwardly with her hoop-skirts, which seemed to be very much in his way.

The lady, smiling, yielded herself to his embrace, and was landed on *terra-firma* as easily as if she had been transported in a balloon.

"Are we to remain here all night?" she inquired.

"I s'pose so, Miss. We uns hev to wait fer the tide. They say time and tide waits fer no man; but we uns has often to wait fer both."

"But are we not in danger of being discovered and captured?"

"I hope not, Miss, uncle is on the track ev them ar Yankees, and he is as cunning as a fox, and as sly as a mink. So you jest sit down thar and make yourself easy, while I makes up a fire. When you gits a tired a settin' up, you kin lay down and take a nap."

As the air was chilly, the young lady obeyed; while Sammy began to gather sticks, and prepare his flint and steel. It was not long before he had a warm blaze burning at the feet of the girl, who had reclined herself under the bower. The red light shone full in her face. Its sweetness charmed the boy.

"Now, Miss, I calls this relightful. I'd rather be here than in mammy's feather-bed. You may go to sleep whenever you see proper," and as he went on he rubbed his hard hands with a degree of perfect satisfaction.

"This is a hard business, Sammy."

"Hard, Ma'am, oh no. I calls this glorious."

"But suppose you should get caught?"

"Uncle says, as how them fellers don't want to hurt we uns. But I think he only talks that way to recourage me."

"What will you do after I go to sleep?"

"Sot up and watch over you, Miss."

"But you will get sleepy yourself before morning."

"Oh, no, Miss, setten here and looking at you, so safe and sound will keep me awake," he said, so thoughtlessly, that he did not weigh his words until he had uttered them, when he blushed at their import.

"Would it not be safer to find some house where we could stay until the tide rises?"

"There ar'n't any housens in this neighborhood. And ef we uns should rummage about here too much, the niggers mought find us out and blow on us."

"Then, I suppose, we must put up with our lot and be satisfied."

"Jest so, Miss. La sakes alive, how interesten it is to see you a lyin' thar so nice and kemfortable a takin' your rest. Let me kiver you up. Now, thar you is as snug as a rabbit in a sedge patch. This is what I calls romantic, Miss."

"Very romantic, Sammy," laughed the girl. "But are you not uncomfortable, Sammy. Your feet are wet, I'm sure."

"Me a cold! Why, bless your sweet life, lady, I'd never git a cold a settin' here a week a looking at you."

"I'm sorry I'm so much trouble to you."

"Trouble, you say, lady, trouble? Ef you calls this trouble I don't know what pleasure is. Why, lady, I feel jest like a jay-bird!" and the overflowing of Sammy's feelings got so much the better of him that he was dancing round the fire like a wild Indian, when a crackling of the underbrush announced the approach of some one, and his uncle reappeared.

Sammy's feathers dropped like a disgusted peacock's as the old man cleared his throat and asked:

"Hev you been into that whisky, Sammy? Your tongue has been a runnin' all night, and now you've got it into your feet. You'd a better be quiet and not allow yer 'tarnal foolishness to run clean away with you; fer mighty quar proceedins is goin on up thar in the land. Thar are an almighty great light in the sky in the 'rection of old Colonel Moore's. It mought be the rawrorar; but ef I'm not mistaken, it looks to me as ef it war sombody's great house afire. Them niggers are all run stark mad up thar, and before my Maker, I jest believe the world are comin' to an end. Things will never be like they was afore—"

Looking after the condition of the girl, and assuring himself that she was comfortable, the old man, after instructing Sammy to be quiet and keep a good look-out, started out again to reconnoitre.

This turn of affairs pleased the boy amazingly. He could

scarcely repress a chuckle of delight. Sitting down on the ground over against his now sleeping charge, he clasped his long legs in his arms and whistled "Dixie" in a low tone as gayly as a mocking bird.

"Go to sleep, my little Duckie. You jest needn't keer fer mortal man. You is jest as safe as ef you was in Heaven. You jest consider yourself thar already and me angel Gabrill a watchin' over you. You is an angel anyway. You is sent to cheer we uns up."—The girl winked her eyes and Sammy took up his "Dixie" a mite confused. "Is you serficiently warm, Miss?"

"My feet are not as warm as I could desire them to be."

"Why, bless my life! these little footsie-tootsies is unkivered. Thar, now, I'll bet they coodn't git acold any more ter night. Don't think about me, Miss, I'm a—a—raccoon, I'm a owl, I'm a regular old watch gander."

The boy's behavior was so comical the girl found it impossible to sleep. So she essayed to talk a while.

"Are you going to the war, Sammy?"

"Ef uncle would 'low me I would."

"What do you want to fight for, Sammy?"

"What does anybody want to fight for, lady?"

"Well, folks have different notions. Some for country, some for their property, and some for wife and children, and all such as that."

"And some, I s'pose, for sweethearts," added Sammy.

"Yes, and some for sweethearts."

"And ef I jest had one ev them I'd fight fer her untwill I died."

"I expect you would, Sammy for you are a good boy." This pleased him very much.

"But I want ter ax yer one question, Miss, can a feller hev a gal, and she not know it?"

"Most assuredly, Sammy, and she may never know it unless he tells her."

"You mought hev one in your mind, moughten you?"

"Certainly."

"It's mighty hard to tell a gal that you loves her, I should guess. Don't you think so?"

"Well, as I am a girl myself, Sammy, I don't know how it is. But I should not consider it very difficult."

"Whew! I think it awful hard, Miss. Would you mind tellin' a feller the first word of courtship?"

"There is not any particular way, Sammy. I have heard that sometimes a mere look is sufficient."

"Then ef I sees a gal what I likes I'm gwine to look at her mighty strong, jest like I shall set here and look at you all night. But your eyes will be shut and you will be dreamin of some other feller all the time. Has you enny feller?"

The girl did not reply. She was either asleep or making believe she was. Sammy, a little disappointed and crestfallen, said to himself: "She am asleep. Ef a feller couldn't fight fer that ar critter he couldn't fight for nothin'. Ef I war grammar larnt it wouldn't be so bad." Creeping softly under the bower, he carefully adjusted the overcoats about the tired sleeper, and again took his place outside by the fire.

It was morning when Captain Evans came running down to the boat, calling Sammy to turn to and help him launch the boat over the sand. The tide had risen considerably.

"Let's git out into the bay as quick as possible, it are safer out thar. The Yankees is all down thar to the landin' and ole Colonel Moore's house are burned down to the ground, and ole Missus Moore perished in the flames. Don't say nothin' to the gal, but hurry."

"These is awful times, uncle."

"Yes, and the sooner we uns gits away from here the better."

Sammy needed no greater incentive than the excited manner of the old man, and taking the painter over his shoulder, while his uncle shoved behind, the canoe was soon put into water deep enough to float a ship.

The young girl was lifted into the boat, this time by the old man, and tumbling in the overcoats and buffalo-robes Sammy followed with all the despatch the occasion called for.

It was well for them that they reached the bay as soon as they did, for they had scarcely got beyond gunshot when a detachment of cavalry rode down to the shore and began firing at them.

The girl screamed with fright, and Sammy bowed his head like a duck at the shadow of a passing cloud; but the old man sat bolt upright, and guided the canoe, which was making good speed before a brisk breeze from the eastward. The shot fell far behind them, and the soldiers seeing that they were too late, turned back and rode away. By ten o'clock the wind ceased and the day grew dull and hazy. This suited Captain Evans, as he did not wish to approach the roads until nightfall, and as boats were scarce along the bay shore he had very little fear of being pursued.

Thus they drifted slowly over, trusting themselves to the mercy of the tides and the whims of the weather. As the

afternoon came on the little party began to show signs of weariness. Captain Evans, usually jolly, looked taciturn and crabbed. While Sammy, with his eyes worn out, at gazing at the fair stranger, nodded and blinked, like an owl in the day time.

"Gineral Jackson and Pocahontas! Sammy, you'll star the lady outten countenance ef you set thar and wink at her in that way. Don't you know it am imperlite to wink at a young lady?"

Sammy assured his uncle that he was not winking.

"But you is. Now ef you feels sleepy, why don't you creep under the foreseat, and lie down?"

Sammy did not move, but rubbing his eyes, averted his attention, looking out over the bay.

"That boy's a curiosity, Miss, so you needn't mind him. He's got some devilment into his head, I can't kalkerlate for."

"I must put in a word for the boy, Captain, he didn't sleep a wink last night."

"Nor he never would agin, ef he had you to look at."

"He's a good boy, Captain."

"Yes, he are good enuff. But reclined to odd ways, when company's about." Sammy still continued to gaze seaward, his face wearing a painful expression.

"Jest look at him, now. He looks as ef he war leavin' the Eastern Sho' for the last time. I surpose he is taken an obsarvation ev the lower limb ev the emensity ev space. It's only lately, I resure you, that he's got into sech a philosophersic mood. I'm afeared he will jump overboard some of these days, or do himself some bodily harm. Please don't do anything rash, Sammy, boy; your angel mother would never find it in her heart to forgive me ef anything should happen to you."

Such a tirade as this made the boy bite his lips.

The young girl saw the effects of the badinage of the old man, and once more pleaded for him, telling his uncle how he had watched over her all night and how sensitive he was.

"I'm sure you do not mean any harm by what you say; but it hurts his feelings very much."

"Well, I s'pose it does. But he'll git all over it afore he's twice married. It are all because you are here that he acts so. But as I war sayin' he is a good boy arter all, and on the Evans side of the house has as good blood and family as flows in the veins ev any 'ristocrat on the Eastern Sho'."

"I really don't know how I shall ever reward him for his kindness to me last night," said the girl.

"You must bar him and we uns up in your prars, Miss. His angel mother will thank you, ef he doesn't.

"So I will, Captain."

"Haul out that ar fried chicken, Sammy, and sassage. This little un is hungry, by this time, I know. Thar are some biskit under thar too. You may jest pass me the bottle. I think a good pull will put me into a better humor."

"I wish somethin' would stop your mouth," muttered the boy as he obeyed.

The lunch was spread on a seat, but the boy refused to touch anything.

"Which is all owin' to the fact of your presence, Miss. Ef you wa'n't here he would eat equalize to a alligator," remarked Captain Evans as he wielded the back of a chicken very dexterously with one hand, while he guided the canoe with the other.

Thus as they sat and chatted, the voyage grew nearer and nearer its end; while daylight faded into twilight, and twilight into darkness, and the great sea came rolling in at the capes, as it did two hundred and fifty years before, when old Sir Christopher Newport sailed up the roads

CHAPTER XV.

THE LITTLE SISTER.

THE well known camp-fire of the coast-guard guided the blockader to his welcome and secure harbor, where he safely landed by ten o'clock that night. The hospitalities of the camp were graciously bestowed upon the female passenger, and in the morning the ambulance was loaded up as formerly and the same journey undertaken to the city, as we have before described, the young lady bearing its fatigues remarkably well, but as reticent as to her name and history as she had been at the landing, from whence they started.

They drove into the city earlier than on the former occasion, having made the journey in less time.

At the junction of Mariner and Church streets, the unknown passenger informed her friends that she must leave them, as she had business with the pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church. She was profuse in her thanks for the kindness that had been bestowed upon her, almost shedding tears as she took her leave; and charging the old man to be

kind to the boy, she took her leave of them, carrying a small hand-satchel, the only baggage she had with her. Sammy looked after her with a longing gaze, never averting his attention until she had disappeared behind the corner of the street.

Let us follow her. From Mariner Street the girl proceeded on her way to Chapel Street, then turning south, she walked to Holt Street. On the south corner of the latter she came to a beautiful church, the tall spire of which seemed to pierce the wintry sky. The last rays of the setting sun flooded its gothic façade with golden light. Surely it was a commanding edifice, with its pinnacled eaves and artistic proportions, inspiring hope in the breast of the now weary stranger, as she halted for a moment and gazed with awe-inspired feelings upon it. A few steps beyond, and to the rear of the church, was the parsonage. The unknown stopped in front of this house, ascended the steps, and pulled the bell. Before doing so, she had carefully read the name of Rev. John O'Farrel on the door-plate. She had not long to wait. A servant met her at the door and conducted her to the study of the priest. The rotund and jolly-looking father was seated at a table in the centre of the room. A student lamp, ornamented by figures of the saints on the shade, a profusion of periodicals, some books, a crucifix and writing materials of various kinds, were scattered here and there around and about him. Everything in the room had the appearance of richness, learning and comfort. The priest did not rise from his seat, but motioned the girl to take a chair. There was one in convenient reach on the opposite side of the table from where he sat. This, the weary-looking visitor gratefully appropriated. The churchman regarded her in silence, as if waiting to hear her story.

"This is Father O'Farrel, I believe?"

"Yes; what can I do for you?" His voice was gentle and reassuring.

"Much, Father," was the somewhat emotional reply.

The priest noticed the earnestness of the young girl, and betrayed signs of awakening interest to know her errand.

"I would be a Sister," she said.

"What has been your religious training, my young friend, and who and where are your parents?"

"My antecedents are Protestant. In replying to your other question, I can only say that I am of age. Please be kind enough, at this time, to spare me a recital of my family history. On some future occasion I will be pleased to relate it."

"But do you not think, my child, it will take you a long time, even in the constant use and practice of penance and prayer, to fit yourself for the arduous duties of a Sister of Charity?"

"For one, Father, who has made up her mind to serve God in the Church of his Son, and through the mediation of the Blessed Virgin, I feel there are no difficulties too great to overcome; no cross too onerous to bear. At all events, I am ready for the sacrifice."

"Have you considered, my child, how hard to remove are the prejudices of early education, especially in matters of religious faith and practice?"

"I think I have seriously and prayerfully considered all these things. To present myself before you for this work, I must say (but not in a boastful spirit) I have braved a great many dangers and hardships. I am ready to endure more."

"How so, my child? You do indeed look weary."

"I have come many miles, some of them by sea, in an open boat."

"Then you must have run the blockade?"

"Yes, sir."

"And all for the purpose of becoming a Sister of Charity?"

"Yes, Father."

"Surely it has taken some faith to do all that, my little friend, and I must commend you for your zeal, if not for your discretion."

"When God calls, sir, he has no respect for policy. I want to become His servant. I have left the vain world behind. My past life has been one of turmoil and unhappiness. If, by self-sacrifice and good works I can find that rest for my soul which I seek, I shall be content. If I cannot find it in the life and vocation of a Sister of Charity, it is not for me on earth. Please, sir, do not send me from you."

The priest seemed to reflect a moment. He resumed:

"For one so young and beautiful as you appear to be, your undertaking is a serious matter; I might say, a perilous one. To become a Sister of Charity is to discover a character experienced, strong in fortitude, and thoroughly disciplined. From your appearance, your life has not been a severe one, physically. You have never seen any rough usage. Suppose you become a Catholic and leave out the orders?"

"In doing that, Father, I should take the orders in my heart, and I should have the faith without the works, the burden without the recompense. I can afford to take the risk. By and by, when you shall have become acquainted

with my antecedents and family, you will not be afraid to trust me. I shall never bring reproach upon my profession, or disgrace my vows."

"You are very enthusiastic, my child, and your conversation shows you to be a young woman of good breeding. Are you really prepared, at your age, to renounce the world and all its vain pomp and glory, to take upon yourself the solemn vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, with all the sacrifice which is implied by the adoption of a life such as these vows impose? To tread in the footsteps of the Divine Master, even to the summit of Golgotha, and there to kneel, with the other female friends of the Son of God, at the foot of the cross, in the very midst of his crucifiers?"

"If I were not resigned to such a service, dear father, I had never crossed the water to come to you. So far from dreading, or fearing it, I welcome it as the surest road to happiness here and hereafter, which is said to be the chief end of man." There was a pause.

"You are, I believe, a Southern lady?"

I am not of the North."

"Have you not with us all looked forward to the time not far in the future when the South shall have gained her independence, when it shall be so remunerative to be of the gay world; when the chivalry of the olden times shall be restored, and the young Confederacy become the most favored of the nations of the globe. The Church even rejoices in the glory which shall come to her in that event. Would you care to be a nun then?"

"Alas, Father, do not speak to me of the war. It can not affect my future, end as it may. I had no hand in its beginings, I can scarcely have a wish in its termination except that I pray God to bring it to an early close, that the agonies of the battle-field may be averted, and peace may come to a distracted country. For myself, nothing!"

"We scarcely find one so disinterested, especially one of your sex."

"To nurse the sick and wounded while it lasts and then to retire to some convent where there is rest, is all that I desire."

She pronounced the word rest with a sigh that touched the priest's heart, as did the tears which started from her eyes.

"Poor child," he said, sympathetically, as he rose from his seat, and, walking to her side, placed his hand upon her head, "the world is indeed hard and cold to one whose heart

is as tender as yours. I scarcely know what to say to you. The life you seek is full of sacrifices. Once enlisted in this work, and wherever the Church commands you to go, even though it be into the very jaws of death, you must obey. Are you, indeed, ready to give up your entire future and to sanctify yourself entirely to the work of Christ? Can you bear to see yourself grow into mature womanhood, with all a woman's vanity, and all a woman's matronly desires ungratified, and then to relapse into old age and decrepitude, like a barren fruitless tree, with no living friend but the Church and the members of your order to soothe your declining life and smooth your death-pillow—I say, can you bear all this?"

The solemn manner of the priest filled the soul of the girl with awe, but did not shake her in her resolution.

"The time might have been, but never has come into my shattered poor life, when these things you speak of might have had an influence over me in casting my future. As I have thus far escaped such temptations, I have now no fears."

At that moment her rich brown hair, but imperfectly cared for, rolled out from its confines and flooded her with a crown of glory.

"Even this," said the priest, in the same solemn voice, "thou must part with."

She cast a side-long glance at the flowing tresses which almost enveloped her in their ample magnitude, and again a tear sparkled in her eye.

The priest regarded her in pitiful silence. It seemed as though all the past and all the future was passing before the mind of the suffering girl.

At last, falling at the feet of the man of God, she broke the painful silence. "Here, Father, cut it off now, I am ready at this moment to make the sacrifice."

The priest was touched to the quick at the girl's simple devotion. Taking her by the hand, he raised her to her feet.

"Poor earth-bound spirit, I am ready to relieve you from your anguish and help you all I can. Put up your hair and prepare to follow me to the hospital of St. Vincent de Paul. I will take you to Sister Matilda. She will teach you our catechism, and so soon as you are able to pass the necessary examination, you shall be admitted into the sisterhood. Afterward, if you still desire to enter the sisterhood, you may become a novice for the term of five years, and if at the end of that time you still remain a faithful child of the Church, you may take the final vows and be received into full connec-

tion with the order. You are very tired now and need repose. Come with me, my child."

CHAPTER XVI.

A FRACAS.

WHEN Claude Walsingham awoke from his deep stupor on the day following his last evening with the lovely Miss Buttercup, he could scarcely realize his whereabouts, so stupid had he been in the Lethe of that woman's charms and her wine.

But whether from a condition of physical reaction or mental and moral conviction, his awakening was anything but pleasant.

His slumber, though unbroken as that of an infant, had not been by any means as refreshing.

Had he been the subject of nightmares as horrid as those of Macbeth, he could not have felt more sore in mind and body than he did.

No angels had whispered to him whilst he slept, no innocent smiles had played about his lips in response to their visits. Strangely enough, his waking thoughts were not of Miss Buttercup, nor of the promised time when she would be all his own. There seemed to impress him some unwelcome memory, vague and uncertain as the memory of some unrecalled vision of the night, which in its passing had furrowed his brain as the thunderbolt furrows the forest pine. There were cowardly sensations of unkept vows, gaping wounds of dishonored character, and feelings of soiled and tarnished reputation. A loathsome meanness seemed to creep up and down his form like hateful vermin or poisonous reptiles.

He arose nervously and began to dress. His clothes did not fit. They were rumpled and limpy, and several times he imagined that bugs as large as beetles were crawling over them. There was a sweet sickening odor about them that disgusted him. Without waiting to take a bath, he threw his coat on and rushed to the street. He found a saloon, entered, and called for brandy. He swallowed it, loathing it as he did so. He ordered another glass, drank that with a better appetite, waited ten or fifteen minutes and drank again. Then feeling better, he went back to his boarding-house to breakfast. By this time his nausea had abated, his eyesight was

in a normal condition and his conscience at rest. At the boarding-house he met his old friends, Captain Evans and Sammy, got his letters and learned the sad news of the burning of Moorefield and the death of Mrs. Moore. The news seemed to stun him at first and he sat with his head bowed down as if lost in thought. "God, it's bad, very bad!" That is what he said. Then, as if he wished to it all put out of his mind completely, he said: "Come, Evans, let's go get a drink."

They went out together, drank until evening, came home to dinner, and by eight o'clock at night he was back again at Miss Buttercup's, having left old Captain Evans in a state of fury at his unceremonious departure for Freemason Street. He had not returned at three o'clock in the morning.

Meanwhile, the old blockader, disgruntled as a bear with a pounded head and quarrelsome as a wet hen in her moulting season, determined to paint the old town of Norfolk a color of deeper hue than his own nose, and feeling in a condition to knock down and drag out any man who had the temerity to stumble across his path, he prevailed on several of the officers boarding at 229 to accompany him, and at once set out to have a circus of his own. It was already eleven o'clock before they started.

In vain, Sammy, as sober as a judge and as sleepy as a boy could well be, pleaded with his uncle not to go out, but retire to bed. "I'm jest agoin' out with the boys, Sammy, to hev a little spree, and you kin jest go to bed—hic—and go to sleep, and not be a botherin' arter me. I'll be back—hic—in an hour or two."

"Uncle, you've had enough to drink already," said Sammy, taking the risk of displeasing his already intoxicated uncle.

"Samuel, do you comprehend who it is—hic—you are redressing? You must recollect that I am your angel mother's own brother, and to insult him—hic—is to insult your own flesh and blood. Ef you wants to retire you kin do so. Ef it is your retention to offer any revice to me—hic—in regards to my conduct, or as to how much, or how little I am to rebibe, you will realize that silence is the better part ev—hic—the better part ev—hic—behavior, for a boy."

"Well, then, uncle, ef you is retermined to go I'm agwine too. You're in no condition to go on the street at this time o' night, anyway."

Now, seaport towns have always some bad places in them, and drunken men are sure to find them. To this rule, our

city-by-the-sea has never been the exception in its most moral days, much less was it in war times.

Those who know will bear the writer out in the assertion that vice of certain character is more open-faced and brazen in this old borough, than in any city of its size in the United States, Cincinnati not excepted.

What must it not have been in the last days of 1861?

On the night in question, Church Street, from Main to Water Street, was a seething, surging mass of corruption and blasphemy. All day long, the gaudily attired denizens of that brothel-quarter had sat in their windows, behind their lace curtains, with painted faces, and endeavored to entice the new soldier or unsophisticated country lad, into their hellish dens.

Sawdusted saloons, with their whisky-reeking odors and voluptuous pictures, and their trained parrots shrieking out their coarse and vulgar jargon, yawned to swallow up the unwary idler as a shark would gulp down a herring.

Women in flowing wrappers and dainty slippers, colored transoms over fancifully painted doors, and lasciviously frescoed halls, the merry sound of the violin and tambourine, and the shuffling of many feet keeping time to obscene music—all lent their enticing charms to a scene but poorly described.

As night came on to make the picture more delightful still, drunken men in gangs roamed the streets, hitting here and stabbing there, and women crazed with liquor, filled the air with curses or thrilled the ear with their hysterical shrieks.

Half-way down Church Street, going toward Union, was a variety show—a sort of play-house, where tables were set, and waiter girls dispensed beer and other drinks, a stage on which model artists posed, and negro minstrels sang, in the rear of which, and behind the curtain, wine flowed, and the *coryphées* of the ballet were dandled on the knees of their patrons. Captain Evans and his posse of tipsy friends, with the youth Sammy, the only sober one in the lot, made straight for this den. I say "straight," the word does not convey the meaning, but the reader can catch the idea. It was nearly time for the play to break up when they arrived there, and many of the sight-seers had departed, but those who still remained were noisy and drunken. Bad whisky, loud songs, and louder representations, had heated the blood of the vicious *habitues* of the place, and they were ready "to knock down and drag out" at the slightest provocation.

Captain Evans was as drunk as he generally got, but had managed to keep in a good humor.

"Samuel, Samuel—" he always called the boy Samuel when he was in his cups—

"Samuel, Samuel, look a-thar at that gal over thar. She are as good-lookin as your little black-eyed 'un what crossed the bay with we uns last night. Haiu't she though?'

"Hush, uncle, you don't comprehend what you're talkin' about. Ef you wants to discourse anything, don't mention that lady's name in this place. She are too good a gal to be thought on in sich a hole as this."

"Samuel, you must not tell your old uncle to hush. Sich disrebedience fer a lad ev your age is beyand fergiveness, and ef you open your mouth to reproof me again, I will hit you a punch in the jaw or my name's not Revel Evans." He turned to his companions and continued:

"Come, boys, let's have some beer. It's war times, and we mought jest as well be gay as not. Its none on us knows how long we uns will be here. Some Yankee bullet or a small twist of hemp will likely settle all on us before another Christmas. So—

'Let the wide world wag as it will,
We'll be gay and happy still,
Happy still—hic——'"

"Stop that are howlin thar," roared a tar-heel—a regular cracker, at least six feet tall.

"Do you hear that clay-eatin scoundrel, a blackguardin' of your poor—hic—old uncle—hic—Samuel?"

"Come, uncle, let's go to the boarding-house. It's a shame fer we uns to be in such a place as this, this time o' night."

"Will you stand that, Samuel, my own sister's child, and see your poor—old uncle 'posed on by a d—— cracker?"

"Come, uncle. There'll be a row here to-night and you must go home."

"You're a sneakin' coward, Sam—"

"Who's a stinking coward?" again roared the tar-heel, rushing up to the blockader.

"My uncle is intoxicated and doesn't know what he is saying. Please excuse him. I want ter git him to go home," said Sammy.

"You had better not say that I am a coward! You jest call me a cracker again, and I'll smash ye," said the unappeased Carolinian, poking his fist up into Captain Evans' face.

"What do you mean by insulting an Eastern Sho' gentleman, you dirt-eatin', yellow-fin, tar-heel," replied Captain Evans, pugnaciously; and as he spoke he made a pass at the Carolinian, brushing the stump of a cigar from his mouth, setting fire to his heavy mustache.

The tar-heel recovered himself as soon as his intoxicated condition would admit, and staggering up to his aged adversary, gave him such a stunning blow that the old fellow went to the ground.

Sammy was for a moment irresolute, but only for a moment. Then, with the ferocity of a tiger robbed of her whelps, he pitched into his uncle's assaulter and fought hand-over-fist, without method or science, but with terrible effect, and beat, bruised, and mangled the luckless offender until his mother would have failed to recognize him.

At this juncture ensued a terrible riot. Canes, knives, beer bottles, and pistols were used with indiscriminate recklessness, and many serious wounds were inflicted before the police could muster force enough to stop the ensanguined affray. Captain Evans, perhaps the most drunken man in the lot, was the least hurt of all; and during the excitement attending the mêlée, managed to crawl out from among the fighters, and with his friends reached the boarding-house near morning.

But Sammy was by no means as fortunate. With two black eyes and a broken rib, the boy was snatched up by the officers and marched off to the station.

When Captain Evans awoke next morning, as fresh and jolly as if he had slept all night and had never seen a drop of whisky in his life, he was shocked to find that Sammy was missing. "That boy is locked up, sure. This is all werry misfortionable, and nobody's fault but mine. I orter been kicked afore gittin' him in sich a scrape. Ef I had a listened to him, this mought not hev recurred."

So much was he troubled that he could not partake of any breakfast, and as soon as he thought the mayor's court was in session, he repaired thither with his pockets well crammed with the money of the day, sure in his mind that a few dollars would be the extent of the punishment, and he would be allowed to take his nephew back with him to lunch.

He was not long in finding out that Sammy was arrested, and being told to wait, he sat himself down in the court-room until his honor appeared.

"Your boy is charged with inciting a riot at the Varieties last night, or rather this morning, sir," said the mayor upon

taking his seat. "And furthermore, the charge seems to be pretty fully sustained. It was, sir, a very serious affair. How many people were hurt was not ascertained. Several were cut and are now in the city hospital. The charge is a serious one, and will go hard with the young man, I'm afraid."

Captain Evans stood with his head bowed over the railing which divided the impersonation of justice from the common rabble, and listened sorrowfully to the remarks of the mayor.

"But your honor, he are nothin' more nor a child, and it war all my own fault, jedge."

"A pretty big boy to beat a man like the one I saw. As to whose fault it was, that's another thing." Then turning to one of the officers who was present when the arrest was made, he inquired: "What sort of a chap is this one you arrested?"

"A big, strapping fellow, sir; as strong as a mule and as supple as a cat. Why, your honor, it took six of us to put him in irons. He's a rowdy, sir, of the first water."

Captain Evans straightened himself up slowly, and measuring the officer up and down, said:

"You are a dirty liar! and ef you war not in this temple ev jestis, I would smash the life outen ye!"

"Silence, sir. How dare you use such language in this place. From your conduct, sir, you are not a whit better than your nephew. If you are not careful, I will have you taken care of also."

"I most respectfully beg your honor's pardon," apologized Captain Evans, with a profound obeisance, "but that poor boy are as innercent as yerself, jedge."

"This is bosh," retorted his honor. "My men are truthful, and I will not allow them to be brow-beaten in my presence. You Eastern Shoremen come here to this city, get drunk, and think you can do as you please. The boy is guilty, and will have to suffer his punishment."

"Well, well, jedge; I see as how you uns is all in cohoot, and I mought as well settle it. How much is the fine, sir?" and Captain Evans out with his wallet.

"This court doesn't take bribes, old man. The sentence is that your nephew serve in the chain-gang for thirty days."

"Gineral Jackson and Pocahontas! jedge; you is the unkindest and unjustest man I ever saw."

"Hush up your abuse, I tell you. This is a light sentence for the offense, and if you don't like it, he can appeal to court and be sent up to the penitentiary for six months or a

year. Do you understand that? Come, now, step aside."

"And all my own fault," groaned Captain Evans. "What will his angel mother say to me ef I go back without him. Jedge, this is misfortionable. That boy is the only son of my sister. She is an 'umman what is a Christian. Ef she hears her son is sarvin' in the chain gang, it will kill her sure, Jedge. This is a werry hard case."

The contrite manner of the old sailor had some effect upon the Mayor. In a kinder, but no less authoritative tone, he said:

"There is one way to get out of this trouble. They are enlisting men for Roanoke Island. If your nephew will enlist in the army, I will let him off with a fine of ten dollars; otherwise, I tell you plainly, sir, once for all, he must go in the chain-gang."

"You are werry *kind*, jedge," replied Captain Evans with an accent on the word "kind." "For an Evans, death are preferable to dishonor. Ef that is your recision, I suppose we uns has nothin' more to do than rebide by it. Kin I see the boy a moment?"

"Yes. Here, sergeant, take this man into the jail and let him see his nephew—the boy that was arrested this morning for rioting on Church Street, and see that the fellow does not escape. This old man is cunning and will bear watching."

Captain Evans looked as if he only lacked an opportunity to make his honor take back such an imputation upon his character, but did not deign to make reply.

At sight of Sammy, lying on a pallet of straw, and looking none the more respectable on account of the night's fracas, the old man knelt down on the floor beside him and wept like a child.

"Jest to think, my boy, that your good-for-nothin' old uncle war the cause of all this. Oh, Sammy, this is werry misfortionable. Ef I had jest rebayed you, poor boy, poor boy!"

The old man's grief was genuine, and affected the boy, who wept also.

"Let you and me git outen this dirty place and go home, uncle. I'm tired ev the war and Norfolk too."

"Go home!" repeated the old man. "Go home! O Lord, Sammy, I wish we mought. I've got you into a miserable scrape, my boy. The senternce are that you must take your place in the chain-gang, or go inter the army, one or t'other."

"Then I'll go inter the army," said Sammy, without hesitation. "Where will they send me, uncle?"

"They say to Roanoke Island."

"Well, uncle, you go home and tell mammy. Tell her to pray fer me—" and he could say no more.

"Me, go home arter gittin you in this fix? Me, go home? What would yer angel mother say, Sammy? No, siree. Whar you go I'm agwine, and when I return to the Eastern Shore, you will go with me. We uns will go together or not at all."

Then the old man bowed his head and groaned.

"Never you mind, uncle; don't take on so sorrowful. I hates ter see an old man in trouble. I hev no doubt it's all for the best. I couldn't hev kept outen the war much longer, anyhow. They would soon hev rescripted me, you know, and then I'd had to go. But you is too old. They will not relow you to foller me."

"Never mind, Sammy, I will work that ar part. Rely upon it, ef you goes inter the army, I goes; so thar, now, let that matter rest. I knows Gineral Wise, and so fur am in good luck, arter all."

"Well," said the officer, "how long do you intend to be parlarbering there over that prisoner. I can't stand here all day and wait for you to get over your blubbering."

It was a savage look the old man cast at the speaker, but, turning to the boy, he mildly said:

"We uns is caged, Sammy. I suppose when we uns has their hand inter the lion's mouth, we uns must git it out as easy as posserble. So good-bye, my dear boy; and you may depend upon me to settle all this business according to Gunter."

Then straightening himself up to his full height and shaking his massive frame like an awakened giant, he remarked to the officer:

"And now you dough-faced—"

Sammy raised himself from his straw and caught him by the coat-tail.

"Hold on, uncle, easy licks, kill the devil. Ef you git inter trouble too it'll be werry—"

"Misfortionable," finished the old man.

"Suppose you trow him a quarter, uncle. I hev one or two more words to say to you afore we part."

The captain took a dollar bill from his pocket and handed it to the officer.

"This pays for five minutes more."

"Hurry up, then."

"I was going to say somethin'," began Sammy—"oh, yes. How about the cunner, uncle?"

"Let her rest her weary bones whar she is Sammy. When we uns come back we uns will find her thar. She is well secure."

"And the gal, uncle?"

"Oh, yes, the gal, Sammy. You can't disremember the gal, kin you, Sammy? Well, I'll tell you all I knows about the gal. She said as how she war gwine to be a Sister of Charity, and I s'pecs you kin see her when you gits outten here, and your face gits well. Howsomever, that is a small matter."

"She war nice, uncle, and every time I thinks of her sweet face, my heart comes right up into my mouth, and I almost cry. Ef I mought see her once more afore I die I would be satisfied, uncle," and as the boy said this he turned over and hid his face.

PART IV.

CHAPTER XVII.

TEN ACRES AND A MULE.

THE once pleasant sight of Moorefield lay like a dreary waste.

Two tall bare chimneys, shivering in the cold winter wind, a few cinders and ashes at their base, the negro quarters and the out-houses, were all that was left of the once hospitable and grand old mansion.

Here the Moores had lived for many past generations, as the tombs in one corner of the yard indicated; some of them dating back to the time when "Sir John Moore ye first of Essex, England, departed this life ye seconde day of October, in ye yeare of Grace one thousand six hundred and fifty, in ye Forty-fifth yeare of his Age.

All was ruin and devastation now. A stray fowl, a lean pig, a crippled dog, which looked like Uncle Daniel's, lying under the thicket, warming his attenuated body in the sunshine, were about all the living things to be seen around the premises. A small volume of blue smoke rising from one of the hunchback chimneys of the smallest of the quarter, showed that at least some one was sojourning there. Within

this lowly hovel was living the only human souls of all the large bustling family which once inhabited Moorefield with its thousands of acres; and of all its flocks and herds not one remained. Old Uncle Daniel and Susie the witch were here ensconced. The latter, in this her ninetieth year, the happy bride of the new lord and master of the old manor. If ever a war in all history can boast of a greater transformation, it has never been the writer's privilege to read of it. But the picture is as true to facts as the noonday sun is to nature.

Old Uncle Daniel and Susie the witch being left alone in this wide world, determined to put their fortunes together, and without parson or ceremony, declared themselves, as was the fashion of their kind, man and wife, and set up at housekeeping in the cottage aforesaid, subsisting on whatever came in their way, and what they could pick up about the camp, to which they paid frequent visits.

Marrying had not improved the face of the bride, or added much toward straightening the kinks out of her back, but the thought of freedom and the promise of ten acres of her old master's rich land and a mule, had worked wonders in her powers of activity and locomotion. Superannuated for years, and put off on another farm to keep the quarters and look after the babies of the mothers who were in the field, this old creature had not done a stroke of work for her owner for a quarter of a century.

Now she was not only a bride, but could step off ten miles with the best of her colored friends, and jump as high at prayer-meeting as any of the brothers and sisters.

Happy Susie and lucky Daniel! For them the year of jubilee had surely come, and they had at last found a home of their own!

A glance into their humble quarters failed, however, to discover anything to remind one of a honeymoon.

The bride was boiling hominy and baking johnny-cake before the fire, and the groom sitting over in the corner making a mat of corn husks. There was an expression of thankfulness in the face of the old man, whether for the gift of freedom or the wife, was hard to tell; but the interesting face of the witch had really more of devilment than either joy or gratitude. As they both worked away at their respective occupations, they occasionally indulged in conversation, but in a tone more like that which is heard between folks who have not only outlived all the mellific sweets of many moons, but even ceased to celebrate the anniversary of their happy union.

"Fore my blessed Marster, Daniel, this here am de year of

Jubelo sure 'nuff. Ole Missus gone, ole marster gone and nobody lef' but Miss Kate, an she no better nor dead. I allus told you niggers what dat ar uns 'twas comin'. You, all un you, tought ole Susie was a fool, now you see. Dat's what good dar is in bein a fortun'-teller, eh?"

"Yes, ole Massa he couldn't stan de loss ob his ole 'umman so he take and die too. He's gone to jine her in de promise lan'. I is real sorry fer dem all. Seems so bad—"

"Hush up, you ole fool, Dan'l, you allus would be a confounded ole hypercrit. What you want ter pity dem white folks fer? De Lord hab come now and 'liberd us, and you settin' here an' a pityin' dem same as ef dey was any 'count. You is de biggest fool, Dan'l, I ever did see in my born days."

"Now, you jest shut up, Susie. White folks am some account, and niggers better b'lieve it. Many's de time ole Massa hab give me drink ob whisky, and Missus been kind and give me flour bread. I kain't help bein' sorry ter see so much 'struction. Look all round dis here place and see ef you can 'joice in your heart ober de sight. Go back wid ole Dan'l fifteen, twenty, sixty years ago, what gloyous times we used to have. Dan'l was young den, jest like ole Massa, (de young Massa den) and we chillun used to play wid one anudder, and ole Massa 'twas den, used ter go fox huntin'; and den de hog killin' and de sausage stuffin' and de big parties and balls and de eggnog! Now dar all gone; and de great house itself gone. Susie, ef you can 'joice over dat you is no Christian. You is a heathener."

"'Joice! you old dish rag; whar would you be dis very day ef you wasn't free? Out dar in dat corn field; dat's wher you'd be wid de o'erseer at your heels a slashin' ob your back. Dat's what you 'lights in Dan'l. You wants ter go back inter slavy you does. You calls yoself my husban' and talks like dat. You is no husban' of mine, Daniel, ef dat's de way youse gwine ter do. You want ter be tied up to de cart wheel and thrashed fer stealin' shoats agin. Yes, you does, Dan'l."

"But, Dan'l never stole chickens nor geese nuther."

"Dat doesn't signify. Ef you means me, I 'knowledge I stole dem and turkeys too. You think I 'low one ole goose to 'vide me and my Savior? You is too bigoty to talk to, Dan'l. When you gits your mule and your ten acres of lan' den you 'gin to 'preciate the blessins ob freedom."

"Yes, yes, ole Massa gone, ole Missus gone, all de chillun 'cept Miss Catherine, and she crazy, dey say, all de niggers run away, and me and the old witch, lord and paromack of all

ole Massa's property. Seems too much ter b'lieve," went on the old man, no longer paying any attention to the complimentary remarks of Mrs. Daniel.

"Well, Dan'l, ef you wants ter be a dog, you can be one that's all. Susie am a free 'umman and allus 'spects to be," and she sang at the top of her squeaking voice :

> For de year of Jubelo am come,"
> An' de niggers dey be a marchin' home."

They had been so busy talking their happy subjects of Hymen, that they had not heard the hoofs of Colonel Burton's horse as he rode up in the yard, and, dismounting, was already on the door block.

"It's Massa Colonel. Come in, Massa Burton, we's glad ter see you. How is you ter-day ?" was uncle Daniel's salutation, as he rose and hobbled across the shanty to take the Colonel by the hand.

"Oh, first-class, Daniel. How are you and your wife ?"

"Oh, we 'uns quite well. Only have a word now and den."

"Marster Colonel, what I wants ter know, is we cullud folks free or no ? Dat's what I and Dan'l fuss about."

"Well, Susie, it looks very much like it. All contrabands are subject to confiscation. I think I'll make contrabands of you two and set you both free."

"Dar den, I done tole you so, Dan'l."

"And, Marster Burton, you'se gwine ter give us dat mule and de ten acres ob ground, ain't you."

"What mule ?"

"Dat mule de Yankees promis' us."

"I know nothing of any mule or ten acres of ground."

"Dar, ole 'umman, I tole you so," was Uncle Daniel's exultant *da capo*.

"Dat ole fool sets dar all day, tryin to make me 'blieve we uns not free."

"You see, Massa Colonel Burton, Susie is gittin 'long old, and we has ter make 'lowances fer her. I jest tell yer, Massa Burton, we niggers ain't white—neber will be. We uns got to look up to de white folks same as ever. White folks' powerful. Can crush us in the yearth."

"In that idea, Daniel, you are correct. Your best interest will be, for years to come, to keep on the best of terms with your former masters. They will, no doubt, feel very bitter toward you at first, but that bitterness will die out, and by and by you will both be good friends. I suppose you were sorry to hear of your old master's sudden death ?"

"Oh, yes, Massa Burton. Poor ole massa couldn't stan de loss ob all his niggers, den his house, and las' but not lees, his ole 'umman. How 'bout Miss Catherine, Massa Burton, whar is her?"

"She is at Doctor Savage's, Daniel, very low, indeed. Her affliction is very great."

"Yes, Massa, dat it is, an I pities her. You mus' take good care on her, Massa Burton, kase she haint got any fader nor mudder now, nur cullud people, nur nuffen. Will de ole place hab to be sole?"

"It looks so now, Daniel."

"Yes, and you too, you 'tarnal fool," put in the witch.

"Hush your mouf, Susie. When de white folks talk, you jest take a back seat. Dey say as how her 'tended over dar in Dixie is gwine mighty fas', gettin' drunk and all sich as dat. I spec he'll furget Miss Catherine over dar mongst all dem fine ladies. She all 'lone now, Massa Burton, and you mus' take mighty good care ob her."

"That's all right, Daniel. What I wished to see you about was this: I want you to keep a close watch on the creek, and if you see anything going on, let me know. I'll see if I can't catch that sly fox of a blockader yet."

"Ay, ay, Massa Colonel. Hab you got a chaw of terbacker for de ole man?"

"Yes, here is a pound I bought expressly for you."

"Thank God, and thank you too."

"I want you also to remain here and look out for the place, the out-houses, etc., and in the spring I will see if I can procure you a mule, and let you go to work, and see if you can make a living for yourself."

"Dar, den, I done tole you 'bout dat mule, you ole dummy," again put in the bride, as she turned her johnny-cakes.

"Meanwhile," continued Colonel Burton, "you may continue to come to head-quarters for your rations, and if you can't manage this old woman, let me know."

"Yah, yah, Massa Colonel, she is right smart hard to git along wid, but she'll git more sense by and by. When she gits her mule and her ten acres ob lan', she will be happy as a clam at high water, as de sayin is, yah, yah!"

"An' go ter work again for de white folks? Nebber."

"But how do you expect to live, old woman, without work?" remonstrated the Colonel.

"I nebber 'spected to hab to work in de year ob Jubelo. Fore my soul and body ef I 'spected to hab work den. Ef dat is de case, I think we uns better go back inter slavery agin.

Dat ain't no freedom. We used to could git a goose now and den, and ole Daniel dar was purty good arter shoats, but 'tain't nuffen to git now, not even a fryin' chicken."

"Hush, Susie, hain't you ashame to go on in dat way, right afore Massa Burton. You and me orter be satisfied wid what we uns got. All dis grumlin' case we hain't got de yearth, is kontrary to de Scripture, which says: "By de sweat ob de brow, dow mus' yearn dy bread. You is like the boy what got de skunk in de gum and didn't know what to do wid it. You'se got your freedom and now you isn't satisfied. You got your husband, an' now you'se all de time agrowlin'. Ef you don't hush up I'll 'ply fer a 'vorce, 'pon my soul I will."

As Colonel Burton walked out of the hut into the yard he looked at the desolation around him, and felt sad at heart.

"O, war, thy ravages are fearful to contemplate," he ejaculated. "Like a pestilence thou sweepest the earth as with a besom of destruction! Where are all the busy feet that used to tread these old haunts? Where the sons and daughters of past generations who gathered here on gala days and reveled in social pleasures, never in any land so enjoyable? How the tables used to groan under the weight of the richest viands! And here was hospitality for all. Yes, all but a Burton!"

The teeth of the speaker, involuntarily closed with a grip, did not immediately relax. He turned about suddenly, mounted his horse, and rode away at a flying gallop.

It was all so. When they took the news of the loss of his wife and property to Colonel Moore, he fell into a swoon from which he never rallied. The freed soul took its flight from the imprisoned body.

Kate was removed from the scene of the conflagration in a condition as near to death's door as one could be and live. She recovered consciousness, but her mind for many days was wavering and flighty. She was the object of great solicitude on the part of Colonel Burton, who, without asking the consent of any one, made it his purpose to see that she lacked no attention until she was convalescent.

When Miss Kate had so far recovered as to be able to leave her bed, he cut his attentions short, and only kept track of his ward by calling at the gate occasionally, and making inquiries as to her health. This course was necessary as well on account of himself, as Miss Moore.

Dr. Savage was a hot rebel, and the Colonel's calls, though politely received, were not by any means encouraged, nor did

Miss Savage, nor Miss Blake, nor any of the school-girls, even so much as notice the Federal officer.

The loss of his sister still preyed upon his mind, and left a void which nothing had the power to fill. He was taciturn and moody, and longed to go to the front, and get away from an atmosphere which had in it all the elements of war and its ravages without the mental stimulus of active service.

By the first of January, 1862, the war had begun in good earnest. Men on both sides began to settle down to the conviction, that the only way to determine it was to fight it out.

Very foolishly, the Confederate Government or the States had fortified isolated points along their coast line. Such a system had proved very efficacious in our foriegn wars, but was doomed to be, in this case, but a waste of time and sacrifice of life. Some of these who had already been taken but Roanoke Island, had as yet not suffered from an attack.

General Henry A. Wise, a Virginia politician of well-known ability, and an ex-governor of the State was sent to defend it. What there was there to defend, God only knew. Nor what to capture until the Confederates put a few thousands of troops on the beach, and sent half a dozen old wooden hulks—side-wheel river steamers, scarcely fit to sail over a mill-pond—to be gobbled up by the Burnside expedition that was then being fitted out for that very purpose.

With New Berne on the south, and Norfolk on the north, both in the hands of the Federals, as they afterwards were, for all Roanoke Island was worth, to either government, General Wise might have remained at Nag's Head and in undisturbed possession of his pet stronghold, until after the surrender of Lee, at Appomattox, and neither side been aware that there was any such place.

But they went on and garrisoned it, and the Federals supposing it to be of sufficient strategetical importance to the enemy for him to occupy, thought that they would dislodge him, if only for a little spring diversion, their main object being to capture Elizabeth City, and other towns on the sound and thus flank Norfolk, and thereby place the whole sea-coast of North Carolina and Virginia under contribution. Such a movement, if successful, would give McClellan a base for his peninsula campaign of unquestionable value.

The days of *playing* soldier at Norfolk were drawing to a close. Recruiting officers began to be seen busily plying their vocation in the streets of the twin cities. Detachments of soldiers were moving daily in every direction. The hospital corps were busy preparing for bloody work.

Men's faces began to grow longer and sadder. The long expected New Year was at hand, but instead of joy it brought sorrow, and a fearful looking forward to coming days of evil.

Friends and loved ones were parting, bidding farewell, perhaps forever! Roanoke Island was the chief objective point on all sides in this part of the world just at this time.

Thither was doomed to go poor Sammy. In spite of all the influence of his many friends—that is, the friends of his uncle, who was well known—and all the moral and political forces his sorrowing and self-accusing relative could muster, there was but one alternative, either the chain-gang or the army.

Now, while Sammy's mind did not run much after fighting, especially with powder and ball, he had less regard to that motley crew of negroes, crakers and Dismal Swamp clay-eaters, one used to see dragging their clanking chains through the streets of Norfolk, at once a disgrace to civilization and religion.

If a necessity exists for such a mode of punishment, that very fact is the best evidence that under proper laws and an enlightened government no such criminal ought to be found.

Sammy chose the army first, last, and all the time, and prepared himself to accept the offer and enlist. The recruiting officer went to the jail and the matter was arranged.

Captain Evans saw General Wise and engaged to supply him with wild-fowl during his sojourn at Nag's Head. He would then be at his liberty to visit the boy on the island at will, and having the friendship of the commander-in-chief, would be a sort of privileged character, to do as he chose. He was a good shot, an old gunner, and as the general was an epicure, the favors were equal.

The plan worked well. The distance between Nag's Head and Roanoke Island did not exceed a few miles, and a day scarcely passed that the old captain was not at the camp. Whenever the boy did picket duty, the old man remained on post with him, and there being no danger of surprise in the night, or even day, until the enemy should come into the Sound, the two found it quite pleasant to sit by a fire and talk over old times.

Their conversations would be chiefly of home, their trips across the bay, the strange young girl they brought over, and Claude.

With the latter, the old man was disgusted. He had not proved, according to his estimation, the right sort of a friend. He thought Claude had treated him superciliously on several

occasions, and when he was almost beside himself with grief over Sammy's troubles, Claude had proved either inefficient or disinterested.

But the fact was, Claude did not care now-a-days for anything but Miss Buttercup and his toddy. His visits to Freemason Street were more frequent, if anything than ever. His military duties were neglected entirely, and not one of the officers boarding at 229 spoke with him at all. More than one pernicious influence was at work on Claude.

King Alcohol had enlisted him into his service, and his most trusted friend had become to be Mr. John Barleycorn. These fine gentlemen had so engrossed his attention and won his affections that he was no longer the patriotic Confederate soldier he formerly was. Miss Buttercup's eggnog was as potent as Miss Buttercup herself, for while the latter's bonds began to be worn loosely, those of the great King were tightening every day more and more.

His whole life seemed to have drifted into one channel, that of voluptuousness. But one cannot drink at Pleasure's fount forever and still be insatiate. All pleasures if overindulged will cloy, and none sooner than those which feed the baser passions. But it is not a satisfying satiety which they afford. They nauseate while they open up an appetite which cries for evermore: Give! give! Claude loathed whisky, but, alas, he could not refrain.

Claude was weary of Miss Buttercup, but he could not stay away. How glad he would be to feel cool and comfortable once more, with a clear head and steady hand. How refreshing would be an evening with Kate Moore, or even Mary Burton, were she alive. Ah! the wages of sin is death, and the way of the transgressor is hard indeed.

If he felt ready to reform, a depraved appetite told him he could not do it and live.

If he lagged in his suit at the house in Freemason Street, its fair mistress was ready to upbraid him.

"I know what is the matter with you, Claude. You are tired of me. You are sick at heart and want to give me up. Your mind is over on the Eastern Shore. Oh, well, go back to your first love. I hear she is having fine times with Yankee officers over there. Well, I don't blame her. I would do likewise. Men are not worth being constant for. Any woman is a fool who ties herself to one man only."

Thus would she nag him on to a desperation which only served to cause him to sin to-day that he might repent to-morrow. It is in this fashion that all men go down, cursing the means one day, courting it the next.

Did she appear *blasé* at one time, and did he think of her sometimes with disgust? It would not be long before in another mood she would appear to him as an angel from heaven. Was the scent of his handkerchief or gloves the next morning, after an evening spent at her house, distasteful? He only need to remain away from her presence a single night and mignonette, or heliotrope, or apple blossoms were not more fragrant than the breeze her fan wafted. So that what was one day slaying him was sure the next evening to revive him. Now, if man were of the sort of those short-lived ephemera which disport themselves in the joys of the bright world for a single day, and then perish in the propagation of their species, all this kind of thing would do very well, but as we survive more than one day here, and thus have to provide for different circumstances, which we may encounter on the morrow, and as we are immortal beings and have to prepare as well for the hereafter, it will not do to risk all on the momentary pleasures of an hour. But we moralize.

Thus, with Claude following his Jack-o'-lantern life in Norfolk, Captain Evans and Sammy waiting for Burnside on Roanoke Island, Kate Moore at Dr. Savage's, on the Eastern Shore, Colonel Tom Burton in the same place, looking after blockade-runners and other small matters, and the bride and groom quarreling their honeymoon out at Moorefield, we take the present leisure to follow the little Sister as she, guided by the good priest, wends her way to the hospital of St. Vincent de Paul.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL AND ST. MARY'S-BY-THE-SEA.

In looking backward to the Catholic Church as the mother of our present Christianity, it is not the least pleasant phase in her remarkable history to contemplate the lofty, self-sacrificing character of some of her eminent propagandists. Not that we shall find them all perfection, or even more than human; but who can deny the fact that some of the fathers even, of mediæval times, offer us excellent models of all that is profitable and beautiful in religious life. Among these none, perhaps, is more worthy of notice, or occupies a more exalted position as to his virtues, or the great benevolent institutions which he governed and which have so gloriously survived him, as St. Vincent de Paul.

Beginning first at Chatillon, in France, in 1629, his excellent order of Sisters of Charity has multiplied itself in many forms and into various names throughout the world.

The object of this order of celibate women being the care of the sick and the protection of foundlings and destitute children, it is the one society of nuns which has met with special favor in all lands and communities, and won the respect of all good people wherever it has been found to exist.

At the head of Fenchurch Street, in Norfolk, surrounded by magnolias, and in the midst of well-kept grounds, stands a large building of modern French architecture. It is one of the chief attractions of this not very attractive city, and is known as the hospital of St. Vincent de Paul.

Here, without regard to religious prejudice, or station, or education, or nationality, except that colored people are treated in separate wards, the unfortunate suffering from sickness or accident, may receive medical attention and careful and tender bedside nursing.

Here the soft, white hand of woman, unsoiled by intercourse with, or contact from, the outside world, administers consolation to the afflicted; and here her gentle voice, recalling the tones of a sainted mother, soothes the careworn and sinking heart of the weary traveler who has fainted by the wayside, and has journeyed to this quiet and secluded spot to die; and here the patient Sister holds up to his expiring view the symbols of eternal life.

Noble, self-sacrificing women! You look odd enough to us Protestants, in your ungraceful and homely attire, and your demure and placid faces so void of passion, and so schooled and impressionless; but the old world can ill do without you yet, and if you are a relic of the past, so are sorrow, and sickness, and pain, and death, and while these endure you will always find a welcome in the hearts and dwellings of suffering humanity!

Through the iron gate, up the stone steps to the broad stoop, and into the reception-room, went the priest with the little Sister.

The Sister Superior was busy in the apothecary shop, but, upon being told that Father O'Farrel was come, did not keep her visitors long waiting. Her face was ruddy and beaming with smiles.

"Sister Matilda, I have brought you a young girl who, while she does not seem to be sick in body, is sad and weary of heart. She wishes to prepare herself for the duties of the sisterhood. I know of no better school than right here in the

hospital, and no more efficient tutor than yourself; so I have brought her to you. Here, under your wing, she can not only learn the stern duties appertaining to your order, but, from actual experience, be able, in a short while, to decide with more certainty whether her present state of mind is the result of mature deliberation, or a less healthy condition, the result of an attack of spasmodic *ennui*. She is a stranger to me and to Norfolk, having crossed the bay last night in an open boat. I have no doubt she will commend herself to you, as she seems to be a young lady of refinement, and virtuous habits. She is very tired, and I suggest, after she has partaken of some refreshments, you allow her to have a comfortable and quiet room; and, after she has slept, you will then have an opportunity to become better acquainted. I therefore leave her in your kind care."

Then, after putting his hand upon the girl's head and blessing her, he grasped Sister Matilda's hand and bowed himself out of the room.

Sister Matilda, who was a heavy woman, past middle life, with laughing brown eyes and rosy cheeks, came forward, and, kissing the girl, asked her name.

"You may simply call me the Little Sister," was the demure reply.

Without renewing the question, Sister Matilda resumed: "You do look pale and weary, my child. I shall call Sister Irene, and have her take you to the dormitory, where, after having something to eat, you may retire and have a good rest. After that I shall send for you and we can have a talk."

Sister Irene came, and the Sister Superior, once again kissing the girl, sent her off with the new attendant, saying, as she did so, "This is the Little Sister; I shall make you her sponsor, Sister Irene. See that she is comfortable and sleeps well to-night. If she should suffer from nervousness, let me know. She may need an anodyne."

Both nuns wore their full dress, including their cornets, and all the time Sister Matilda was speaking, the long ends of hers flapped like the wings of some huge bird.

Their habits were of a sombre blue color, and each one of them wore a rosary and metal crucifix suspended from a girdle at the waist.

Their heads must have been close shaven, as not a vestige of hair could be seen below the tightly fitting bands of their white cornets.

The room to which the Little Sister was conducted was comfortable, without any pretensions to luxury. A plain iron

bedstead with clean linen, a chiffonier, a table and two chairs, besides a wash-bowl and pitcher, made up the the list of appurtenances. The floor was of hardwood and carpetless. At the head of the bed was a small table, on which a wax candle and a crucifix were placed.

"This is your room. Make yourself perfectly at home," said the blue-eyed sister Irene, her fair face and even teeth, which showed in two magnificent rows of pearls when she spoke, giving her an appearance of refinement and purity. "I will now descend to the kitchen and see if I can hurry you up some supper."

The Little Sister thanked her clever attendant; but without taking as much as a passing glance at her surroundings, or waiting for the promised lunch, disrobed herself, and throwing her exhausted little body upon the bed, was fast asleep when Sister Irene returned with a cup of tea, some boiled eggs and hot rolls, which she had hastily prepared. Seeing that her charge was resting quietly, she did not disturb her, but setting the viands on the table, slipped out of the room and left her to recuperate her wasted energies.

Youth readily renews itself. The overstrained physical powers of the young, like a new bow, adjust themselves at once when the tension has been removed. The Little Sister awoke early the next morning fully restored to her normal condition. She felt, at the first moment of returning rationality, a slight depression of mind, such as we sometimes experience after long struggles with trials, even though we have overcome them, feeling the effects of the heavy burden still, although it has rolled from our weary shoulders forever —a sort of vague unrestfulness, indefinite yet palpable. So lingered yet on the little one's memory some hard battle of the past which she felt grateful to thank God was at last behind her. When Sister Irene came with breakfast she was up and dressed.

"You are feeling much improved, Little Sister, are you not?"

"I am indeed. I was very tired last night, and slept like a log."

"You look much refreshed. I hope your appetite has returned."

"Take a chair and see me devour this food, and you shall have no need to hope. I am quite hungry."

While eating, the Little Sister took occasion to observe her pleasant patron. She was pleased with her appearance, Sister Irene being the exact counterpart of herself. She was a clear,

bright blonde, slight in form and delicate. She also saw that Sister Irene wore a plain gold ring on the third finger of her left hand.

In demeanor she was sad and reflective; but sweet and beyond any doubt lovely in her manners. For a friend, the Little Sister was suited beyond anything that she could have asked for; and felt toward her already as a sister.

"We shall surely be good friends."

This was the unexpressed sentiment of both of them.

"Do you find it pleasant to be a Sister?" asked the novice, more to have something to talk about than anything else.

"Oh, yes, I will not allow myself to see it in any other light. We are all happy here. What can afford more real solid comfort in this world than a sense of duty well performed. Worldly pleasures are not lasting. There are some flowers whose odor grows more and more grateful the longer you inhale them; while others first intoxicate, and then disgust. The former are like religious enjoyments, the latter like worldly pleasures."

"But does duty always fill every longing of the soul? Can you always find a solace in such a life?"

"To meet and conquer temptation we have not only to perform our duty so far as it refers to works; but in prayer and penance we find a fullness which leaves no room for any other desire but to serve and love the Saviour of man. I trust, my dear Little Sister, you have already received that satisfying grace?"

"I know there are pleasures for the young outside of convent life, pleasures we are made with capacities to enjoy; but out of the excess of human happiness grows the noxious plant of human woe, and when we reap we gather the tares with the wheat."

"Am I to infer from your inquiries that you are regretting your choice?"

"By no means, my dear Sister. I trust I shall never regret it more than I now do. With one so sweet as you, dear Sister Irene, how could there be regrets or misgivings, I know you will assist me with your best endeavors to be full of faith and full of good works."

"That I shall, my dear Little Sister," replied the nun as she kissed the girl passionately.

After breakfast, the Sister Superior sent for the Little Sister. Sister Irene conducted her to Sister Matilda's room.

"You are aware that according to our rules you must be a novice at least five years before you can take the vows of sisterhood?"

"So I was informed by Father O'Farrel."

"We require, at that time, a full surrender of all your worldly goods, and a free and voluntary assumption of our orders, the purport of which, I suppose you already know."

"I do."

"And you are determined to become one of us?"

"I am."

"I have promised Father O'Farrel to take you here as a novice until you shall have arrived at the end of your novitiate. You will have to be instructed in the catechism, from which you will learn the tenets of our faith, and having done that, you will receive confirmation. This, with one of your apparent education and discernment, will not take long, and when accomplished, you may assume the duties of a Sister-novitiate, under the care and guidance of your instructress, Sister Irene. We shall, doubtless, soon be very busy. This fearful war, so much to be regretted, will send us many patients, and we may extend our operations even to the field of battle, where we shall need all the nurses we can get. Sister Irene will take you down to see Father O'Farrel to-day, and as you are a stranger, you may spend an hour very profitably in the church, examining the pictures which are said to be second in reputation to none in this country, so far as church decorations are concerned.

"It is needless for me to say to you that you must be very discreet while away from the institution. It is imperatively necessary that you be so. The Church, as well as the sisterhood demands of you that you bring no reproach upon her. I mention this because you are young, and the eyes of the world are on us all the while; and young people are thoughtless. Be faithful to your anticipated vows, and nothing can harm you."

While delivering this lecture, Sister Matilda assumed the air of one who was in authority and had a right to command obedience; but when she was through, her face resumed its wonted cheerfulness, and the Little Sister felt that in the Superior of the Hospital, she had a friend as kind and considerate as a woman could be, and at the same time preserve the dignity of her position.

The forenoon was spent in looking over the institution. Its arrangements were different from what the young girl had supposed that of hospitals to be. The floors of St. Vincent de Paul were not laid off into wards, but into rooms similar to those of a hotel, and these were furnished with suits of valuable furniture, carpeted and made as comfortable as

modern taste and art could make them. In the rear of the main building, and connected with it by a long corridor, was the chapel. Here mass was said twice a week, and the mortuary services performed over those professing the Catholic religion who died in the hospital. Here, also, the Sisters went to pray morning and evening. The hospital was not crowded with patients at the time, and many of the Sisters were doing service at the bedside of people who were sick at their homes.

In the afternoon, Sister Irene took the Little Sister down town to pay a visit to Father O'Farrel.

They found the good priest at home, and the little novice took her first lesson in the catechism, acquitting herself very creditably, pleasing both her preceptor and pastor. The call was without ceremony, and the Little Sister began already to feel repaid for all the dangers and trials she had experienced in coming to Norfolk to become a Sister of Charity.

From the rectory, they went to the church. St. Mary's-by-the-Sea, though not a large edifice, is superb in its proportions and pleasing in its outlines. In its exterior the eye delights to wander from façade to roof, and from roof to spire, failing to discover a single thing to mar the beauty of symmetry which pervades the entire superstructure.

Passing through the vestry-room, the two women entered near St. Joseph's altar, and stood in the chancel kneeling in front of the main altar. From thence, beginning on the left, they proceeded to examine the paintings which represent the thrilling scenes that constitute what is known as the stages of the cross. These pictures, all painted by European masters, they saw had been presented by members of the church. Under each was the name of the donor with the inscription: "*Pray for the soul of* ——"

To the mind of the nun these paintings seemed to bring only the association of the painful events they commemorated, but the Little Sister, less devotional, saw in them the painter's art and the poetry which burned in the painter's soul. While she felt that she stood on holy ground and almost in the presence of her suffering Lord, she could not be oblivious to the consummate skill and lofty genius of the hand that executed the work. The finer the masterpiece, the greater respect it awakened in her for the artist, and the deeper sympathy for the suffering Saviour.

"Jesus condemned to death," represented the meek and helpless prisoner before Pilate's judgment seat," "Jesus bearing his cross," and "Jesus meeting his mother," were some of the

finest. But, by far the most striking of them all, perhaps because possessing more the spirit of romance, was that representing the legend of Veronica wiping the face of the weary Saviour, as he climbs the rugged hill, weary with bearing the heavy beam on which his blessed body is soon to be stretched. The tender touch of the womanly hand and the gracious acknowledgment of a weary God, were graphically drawn, and touchingly portrayed.

The painted windows, with their softly subduing effect, as they admitted into the gothic vault above and through the shadowy nave a faint and spiritual light, on this quiet winter evening, was not the least impressive feature of the sursoundings. The one near the altar of the Blessed Virgin, representing the visit of the wise men to Bethlehem, was especially admired by the novice. When the two women turned from this, the last object of their admiration, the shadows of coming evening, always so premature in these short days of winter, were lengthening.

During their visit to the church, they had noticed here and there, groups of persons, two or three in number, engaged in the same pleasant pastime as themselves, with now and then a solitary soldier at his devotions, or a backwoodsman wandering through the church listlessly gazing at the strange appurtenances of a church he had only read about. As they moved toward the door, intending to pass out by the front entrance, there suddenly swept by them a tall, handsome gentleman in the dress of a captain of cavalry, and leaning on his arm in a most familiar and affectionate manner, a stout young lady in rich attire, her long train sweeping the carpeted aisle as she passed.

The officer looked at the two women as he passed them, stopped, and peered almost insultingly into the face of the novice, and passed on. The Little Sister first grew red, and then pale, and staggering for want of animation, sank lifeless into a pew, clutching Sister Irene's arm as she went down. The latter cast a glance of displeasure after the retreating couple, just as the gentleman looking back, saw that the girl had fainted. He immediately came back, and asked if he could be of any assistance, his lady remained where she stood. Sister Irene caught sight of the face of the finely dressed lady, and changing color, said to the gentleman: "Your services are not required, thank you. There is no need of any interference; she has only swooned." As he did not seem inclined to proceed the nun spoke with greater vehemence. "Please, sir, go on. Your presence here, sir, when she comes

to, would only add confusion, and retard her recovery. I have no need of any assistance."

The lady who was waiting gave her head a toss of impatience, and her companion, bowing to the nun, joined her, offered his arm, and the two walked out of the church. Sister Irene ran to the vestry, obtained a glass of water, and returned to find the Little Sister fully recovered.

"These rude people should not be allowed to visit such a place as this," she said, handing the glass to her little friend.

"Never mind that, I was only frightened a little at the man's curiosity. He looked at me so searchingly. It's foolish, I know, to act in this way, but it's all over now, and we will go back home."

"These people are very rude," reiterated Sister Irene.

"Do you know them?" inquired the other.

"The lady, very well. Her companion is a vain coxcomb of a man, who they say is infatuated with her. I will give you a history in which she figures rather conspicuously, some of these days."

"Do, Sister Irene, I shall be only too glad to hear it."

The keen winter air on the street had the effect of reviving the novice, so that by the time they reached the large building at the end of Fenchurch Street, there was left no trace of her recent indisposition save a slight palor of the face, which only seemed to heighten the contrast of her dark eyes and the long silken eyelashes which shaded them. As Sister Irene was leaving her in her room, she kissed her over and over again.

"You are so beautiful, my dear, I cannot help it," she said. "I will come back by-and-by and tell you the story appertaining to the lady we saw in the church to-day."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A FELLOW-FEELING MAKES US WONDROUS KIND.

Nor was Sister Irene at all remiss in her attention to her charge.

She went to the kitchen and prepared some tea and toast, and cold fowl, and fruit, and had the satisfaction of seeing the Little Sister partake of it with a hearty relish.

"If you call this penance, Sister Irene, I should like to know what indulgence is," laughingly remarked the novice. "Do the Sisters all live in this fashion?"

"No, my child, not always. We live comfortably, not daintily. Besides, we accustom ourselves to abstemiousness. We often fast you know."

"Why, then, am I so well taken care of?"

"Because you are weak and considered on the sick list yet," said Sister Irene, smiling.

"Heaven has blessed me in sending me such a good friend and companion in you, dear Sister Irene."

"Don't speak of it, my little one. The blessing is mutual. I have often prayed for just such an associate as you. I will remove these dishes, and then come again and we shall have a nice talk. I shall hurry back."

"And I shall look for you every moment until you return, my precious guardian."

"It seems to me we have known each other for years," began Sister Irene, on her return after supper, as she took a seat by the bedside, her little friend having lain down.

"Do they allow you to wear rings?" asked the novice, feeling the cold metal as her attendant laid her hand over her forehead, putting back the rich clusters of her dark hair.

"Yes, we are allowed to wear what are called order rings or vow rings. Mine was given me by a dear friend several years ago. I wear it for his memory."

"A lover?" ventured to inquire the Little Sister.

The pale face of Sister Irene was suffused with a crimson glow, which set it off finely.

"Not exactly a lover. Had my little friend better try and go to sleep?"

"But you promised to tell me something about that fine lady we saw to-day."

"Yes, I remember. I scarcely think I shall have time to do so to-night, and you are too nervous to listen. I know the lady well, and was sorry to see so fine a looking gentleman with her. She is considered a great flirt' and manages to keep society here in a state of continual perturbation; although the best people of Norfolk very generally repudiate her. But hadn't we better drop the subject lest we grow uncharitable?"

"Please go on," pleaded the other, her large brown eyes gazing wistfully up into the face of her attendant with an earnestness which did not escape the older woman, as she rose to place the wax taper behind her, the light of which was falling full in the face of the reclining novice.

"Please, Sister Irene, do not leave me yet. I know I cannot go to sleep if you leave me; and I shall be so lonesome."

"I was not going, dear."

"Thank you. I do feel so much more comfortable when you are with me."

"It is just as comforting for me to be with you, my dear friend. Somehow or other you seem to be an old acquaintance. There is something in your face which appeals to my memory as one of whom I have dreamed, if not met, at some time of life. If this is our first meeting, the coincidence is one of those plausible instances by which the ancients attempted to prove the immortality of the soul."

"Perhaps," said the novice, "they were right, after all, and you and I have known each other in the past eternities."

"It is strange, but your voice, your eyes, your smile, come home to me with such force that I am almost shocked at their familiarity. You may depend, my dear Sister, I shall not lose a moment to be with you."

"But Sister Irene, can't you tell me more of the person we met in the church? My mind is continually running after her."

"Cease to think of her, my child. It is her victim who ought to enlist our deepest sympathy."

"Her victim?"

"Yes, my dear. She victimizes every young man who happens to be caught in her net. She slays without pity all who come within her reach. If the ghosts of all the young men she has led astray ever come back to haunt her, the Lord have mercy on her soul. He was a clever-looking man, and therefore I feel for him."

"But, can he not be saved? Is there no way to warn him of his danger? Can we not pluck him as a brand from the burning?" As the Little Sister said this, she raised herself up on her elbow, her dark eyes penetrating the very soul of Sister Irene.

"Can the bird be saved from the toils of the fowler?"

"Yes, my dear; you remember the ant?"

"True; but to do it, we have got to reach him. It is hard to convince him of his error. When once a woman of her beauty and wiles has fastened upon a man, it takes extraordinary force to break her hold. Though one rose from the dead, he will not believe her false. Nothing but experience, the saddest but most effective of all teachers, can induce him to give her up. She leadeth, and 'he goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; or a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not it is for his life.'"

"But, Sister Irene, this man looks to be well bred and sensible. If he really knew what sort of woman she is; if some good friend should interfere—if nothing else but a word of warning—I fancy he would listen."

"It is barely possible. It seems to me he could not help hearing the scandal which has already been attached to his name in consequence of the *liaison.*"

"Do you, then, know his name?"

"They say it is Captain Walsingham, of the Eastern Shore. He should not be without friends. His standing in the army ought to protect him."

"But, my dear Sister Irene, he is a soldier, and cut off from all home influence, far from loved ones, and in the midst of a gay and profligate city, drugged by the war spirit, intoxicated by its glamour. He is, no doubt, inexperienced with such persons, and the more noble he is in his disposition, the easier gulled by the temptress. Oh, my dear Sister Irene, can we not save him? We must try. It is our duty. We are but indifferent followers of the Master if we cannot reach and rescue those who are perishing morally, as well as those who are physically afflicted."

Sister Irene was astonished at the vigor of the novice's zeal. "I have had, my dear, sympathetic child, a sad experience in that line already, and in connection with that very woman, which I will relate to you to-morrow night, and then if you think there still is hope, I am with you to the rescue, heart and soul. You must rest now, so I will bid you good-night," and taking the Little Sister in her arms, she imprinted a dozen kisses on her lips and left her to dream of plans to save the young officer from his impending doom, and to impatiently wait for the coming evening, when her faithful sponsor would detail to her the promised revelations concerning her own history and the evil deeds of the fair sorceress, whose smile was danger and whose embrace was death.

The next evening found the two Sisters at an early hour, through with their tea, and the elder ready to begin her narrative. She said: "Woman, my dear Little Sister, was born to love. Mark me, I say *woman.* There are some human beings who pass for women who, but for their attire, would never be taken for such. These belie their sex; but the world of a true woman is a universe of love. She can flourish in no other atmosphere. She pines and dies where there is nothing to love. Nor is it at all necessary that she receive affection, for her heart is a perennial spring, not a reservoir, and can give out eternally and never run dry.

"The Jewish estimate of her character, my dear Little Sister, is false. She is not the weaker vessel, morally speaking. Neither is she man's enemy, as represented in Jewish writings. There are temptresses—sirens as hardened and dissolute as they can be—possessing more devils than seventy times seven; but clothed in her right mind, even a Mary of Magdala becomes a saint than whom no angel in heaven is more honored. But to my story.

"Years ago there was, in this old town, a mercantile firm, by the title of Bockover and Buttercup. The concern was a wealthy one, and owned many ships doing a trading business with the West Indies, and ports up the Mediterranean. My father was the head of the house. Miss Buttercup's the junior. The old people are all dead now, except the mother of Miss Buttercup, who is still living with her queer daughter.

"Ten years ago we were all rich and happy. Alas, what changes a few years bring forth!

"In 1854 the firm broke, and with its fall, my parents unable to stand the blow, went down to the grave, and I became a novice.

"I will not tire you with details. The year before the failure of the business of Bockover and Buttercup, my father's attention was called to a young man, who had made several voyages in one of the ships, and who by promotion had risen very rapidly to the position of mate, and who by the death of his captain at sea, became the master of the vessel. My father took great interest in him, trusted him implicitly, and introduced him into our family. By some means or other it was discovered (perhaps by the young man's own confession), that prior to his employment by the house of Bockover and Buttercup, his life had been irregular and intemperate. Whatever might have been his past life, he appeared to be thoroughly reformed, and was always particular to shun all manner of temptation. He had been in our company sometime and we had all begun to think a great deal of him. When in port on Sunday, he always went to church with me, and I never had a friend I thought so much of. In fact, my Little Sister, I soon learned to love him as a brother. One day he gave me this ring." Sister Irene's voice trembled, and a tear-drop stood in her eye, as she withdrew the ring from her finger, and handed it to her companion, who, with her gaze intent on the nun, held it in her clasped hand while the latter proceeded:

"I do not think he ever realized the depth of my affection. If he ever loved me he did not declare it, yet I shall always

believe that if our association had not been rudely broken up he would finally have done so.

"There seemed to be something bearing on his mind which made him sad at times, though what it was I never knew. Miss Buttercup is older than I am and had lived a gay life up to this time, and had several suitors, being considered very brilliant and very fast. But a most singular circumstance attending all her alliances was that every one of her beaux, after waiting on her a few months became inebriate, and worthless. One after another of these young men were thus used up only to make room for another. Well, one day when the bark on which my young friend was captain, was in port, having just arrived with a cargo of fruit from the West Indies, Miss Buttercup, accompanied by her father, went on board and was presented to the handsome commander. I was present and saw at a glance what a powerful effect her great personal attractions had on him. I was not jealous, but knowing her as I did, I feared for my friend as I would have trembled for a brother. From that moment he seemed like one transformed, as if by the wand of a magician. He did not slight me, but a mania for Miss Buttercup's society seemed to take entire possession of him. I saw he was infatuated, and tried in the most delicate way to warn him of his danger. Alas, he imagined that all my good intentions sprang from self interest, and I had the mortification of seeing my efforts produce just the opposite effect from what I intended. Every time his vessel came in (and it seemed that some occult power assisted him in his voyages, he made them so rapidly), she was sure to meet him at the wharf, and taking him from his duties, kept him with her until the ship was ready to sail again. This did not last long before he began to show signs of dissipation.

From the very best of commanders he grew to be irritable, negligent, and untrustworthy. His men, who had loved and respected him at first, soon deserted the ship, and, not being able to keep his crew, my father discharged him. In a little while Miss Buttercup dropped him; he lost caste in society, and being penniless and without friends, he joined the army as a private, and I have never heard of him since."

"And the woman?"

"She went on in her same old way. When the Prince of Wales was here, last year, she went wild over him, and some people said she followed him back to England. Since the war began she has reaped a plentiful harvest out of the unwary officers, who, having heard of her fame, are easily caught in her toils."

"You did not tell me the name of your unfortunate friend?"

"It is in the ring."

"I have been so interested in your story I had forgotten I had it."

The Little Sister held the ring up to the candle, looking inside of it. She read, turned it round, then read again. The ring dropped from her fingers, and she staggered into Sister Irene's arms.

CHAPTER XX.

TIME HEALS ALL WOUNDS.

ONCE more we cross the Chesapeake. From the chaos of rebellion, the general commanding the Eastern Shore forces soon evolved a condition of order, security and confidence. A provisional civil government was inaugurated, the courts reopened, and those who were so disposed resumed their ordinary occupations. There was an occasional altercation between the soldiers and citizens, some little trouble growing out of the changed relations of master and servant, but, upon the whole, there was very little to complain of, and those who took advantage of the new order of things and went to work, found business of all kinds remunerative.

Colonel Moore being dead, his creditors unwisely moved a settlement of his estate, and his large tract of land at Moorefield, as well as other estate, was sold at public auction. Forcing a sale at such a crisis was bad, both for creditors and the deceased colonel's heirs. The former were justly punished for their cupidity, and poor Miss Kate left penniless.

The elegant farm, where the family had resided for generations back, and which, three years before the war, would have sold for twenty thousand dollars, was knocked down to Colonel Burton for the paltry sum of five thousand. No situation could have been more deplorable than that of the luckless daughter of the once proud aristocrat.

Born in the lap of luxury; reared in the midst of extravagance and hospitality that knew no prudence, but in all things characterized by almost a wanton prodigality; petted from girlhood, flattered by attention, and warped in the school of prejudice, no one was less calculated to face a frowning world than Kate Moore.

Stricken almost to death's door by the climax of all her misfortunes—the loss of her mother under the painful circumstances heretofore related, as well as that of her father, equally pitiable, if not so horrifying, now reduced to poverty, and without a relative—who would take care of her? Who *could* undertake to supply a tithe of those comforts she would naturally look for, and certainly miss? At Dr. Savage's she was once the most welcome guest; the entire household felt honored in her visits. The very negroes danced to see "ole massa" Colonel Moore's coach drive up to the gate. Now, the feminine head of that family began to cast about for an equivalent for the young lady's board. Instead of servants to attend her every beck and call, Miss Kate, as soon as she was convalescent, was left to wait on herself, and even to do her own washing, make her own bed, and keep her own room in order.

Miss Savage was kind enough in her indolent way, but it was a kindness of such a don't-care, conservative sort, that went for nothing, and passed for full value at that.

Miss Blake was brisk and practical as ever, taking matters as she found them, and chiefly exercised about the collection of her bills.

The old doctor, superannuated and hen-pecked, never interfered with family matters, though the scape-goat for all the ills which hard times had brought upon them.

Colonel Burton still called frequently to inquire after Miss Moore's health, but seldom alighted from his horse, or saw the object of his solicitations. Whether she did not desire to meet him, or whether it was disagreeable to the family for her to entertain him, he did not know or seek to know.

The doctor's family was large, many of the girls of Miss Blake's seminary being boarders in the house, and servants in great demand. It was as much as they could do to make both ends meet. Farming had been neglected the year before, provisions were scarce, and very little money afloat, except Confederate scrip, which was worthless. Mrs. Doctor Caleb was pinched to find something to put on the table.

"I do declare, we shall all starve to death, unless you get up and go out and do something," she would say to her liege lord. "You sit here all day, looking into the fire, and see me put to all kinds of extremities to hunt up something to put on the table, without doing one solitary thing to help me. I should think you might chop a little wood. And now there is Kate Moore on our hands. I suppose we shall have to support her as long as she lives." Of course Mrs. Doctor Caleb didn't ever expect to die herself.

The worthy disciple of Esculapius was too much accustomed to such broadsides to venture any reply to them, so he simply cleared his throat, blinked under his gold spectacles, and remained silent.

"If Kate was any kin to us, or had any claim on us, there would be some reason in our putting ourselves to trouble for her, but why that dirty, good-for-nothing Tom Burton should put her off on us is more than I can account for, and, I will just tell you, more I shall not put up with it."

"Lord, Jane, do hush, The poor girl is of good family, she has been very unfortunate, and has no friends or home. Don't be so hard. I really do not know what the poor child will do," the old man ventured to say.

"Poor child, indeed! You had better begin to pity your own daughter. If this kind of thing goes on you'll have something else to do than sit here by the fire and toast and scratch your shins, and pity old Colonel Moore's brats."

The old doctor seized his gold-headed walking-stick and left his better half indulging in her favorite pastime, unable to stand the fire any longer.

The last words he caught were:

"Let her *friend*, Colonel Burton, take care of her."

It was not necessary for Kate Moore to hear such tirades, to be sensible of them. They left an impression on the very atmosphere. The little bitter waves set in motion by a shrewish tongue, rolled back to the walls, and reverberated for hours and days, and while they were not appreciable to the ordinary auditory organ, they did not escape the cateleptic nerves of a sensitive female. She felt she was not desired now. With this thought ever uppermost in her mind, she loathed the very food she eat. It was hard to bear the ill-concealed cleverness of Mrs. Doctor Caleb, the stupid indifference of Miss Savage, the cold and worldly-wise ways of Miss Blake, and the cruelly curious insinuations of the school-girls.

She asked herself how long she was to be doomed to this new torture; and determined to leave at the first opportunity.

But fate was still not appeased. More sacrifices were still called for. The news from Dixie was gorgeous. But at last sensitiveness ceased to respond to any stimulant no matter how caustic. The wounds began to cicatrize. There comes a time when the galled jade ceases to wince. Miss Kate Moore, no longer to be called poor Kate, because of sympathy, had reached that point. As stoical as the sphynx, she heard

of Claude's escapade, without feeling and without comment. There was but one longing in all her heart. Like one who, when sick, lies and thinks of all the good things he has despised in days of health and happiness, so Kate remembered Mary Burton, and said: "If she were alive I should have a friend." She had no tears. They were frozen up long ago. The muscles of her face became fixed and rigid. Her hair turned gray. From a full beautiful form ready to burst from its confines, in the full exuberance of its maturity, she shriveled up into the straight, austere outlines of a spinster, angular and sapless.

Kate Moore was wrecked, but not humbled. Crushed, but not ruined. Her soul had soared above earth's fiercest storms, and now she asked odds of nobody. A neighbor's help being gone (a widowed lady living alone) Kate volunteered and went with her as cook; and with her first day's work came the premonition of spring-time, and the light of hope into a heart whose midnight had been, not long, it is true, but as black as the dwelling-place of Erebus.

Colonel Burton heard of her resolve with pain but could do nothing to avert it. He was afraid to offer her any assistance, knowing as he did her independent spirit. He entertained the hope, however, that he might be able to see her oftener now, and set about to devise in his mind some way to assist her without compromising her self-respect.

"He visited his newly purchased farm, where his tenants, the bride and groom, were still residing, and constituted Uncle Daniel his overseer for the present, saying:

"I will allow you meat and corn-meal, give you the use of a mule and an ox, and provide you with corn and fodder for farming. You may have the use of this outfit for a year and pay me for them at the end of the season. You and the witch may now go to work for yourselves, and if you both sit in the hut and do nothing, I will turn you out."

The old man was very thankful for the kind favor, and although Susie thought it very hard lines for free people, she saw nothing more promising even though it was the year of "Jubelo." She accepted the situation and kept the quarters, while her husband and a hired boy went to work with a will, and cultivating the richest lands about the dung-hill, soon had a good prospect for a crop of Irish potatoes, green peas, etc.

All winter the Federals were busy extending their lines of communication down the peninsula, connecting Old Point by lines of telegraph and steamboats with the North, and it

only now remained for them to capture Norfolk, to make the conquest of Eastern Virginia complete.

While passing up and down the road, which he frequently did, Colonel Burton never failed to pay his respects to Kate Moore, seeing her oftener now, and winning her confidence more and more, and making her hard lot appear less onerous, by the assurance that she had at least one friend upon whom she could rely whenever she chose to acknowledge him as such. He noticed with feelings of deep commiseration, her altered looks and plain attire, and could not rest until he had raised her to a position more befitting her birth and education.

As the spring came on and the tide of war rolled further and further back from the sea-coast, and the noise of booming cannon became less frequent, the fields grew greener in the Eastern Shore, and the people became more satisfied with their lot. It is doubtful, even now, if they would have again cast their lot with the Confederacy had they been allowed to choose for themselves.

All the troops except the one regiment of Colonel Burton had been ordered to the front, and he longed to be gone also.

He was now provost-marshal, and his considerate administration of affairs won for him the respect of everybody. People now began to see wherein they had been wrong, and felt like doing penance for all the wrong they had done him and his family.

At every indication of the return of good feeling, Colonel Burton's heart smote him with an irresistible feeling of regret and sadness to think his sister was not there to hail it. Poor thing, her faith had failed her just when the day was breaking!

Calling on Miss Moore one day, he said:

"I am afraid you have forgotten your promise and violated your treaty. You have not used me as you agreed to."

"It is because, Colonel, I have not needed you. When I had friends and property to protect—those whose lives were near and dear unto me—for their sakes, I was willing to treat with you. But since I am left alone, I hope I may not have any further demand for your services."

"I must admire your unselfishness, Miss Moore; but I am grieved to see you in such a menial position, and would, if you will allow me, place you in a situation more becoming your former station."

"Colonel Burton, I deem your proposition an honorable one, prompted by a feeling as high souled as it is generous.

Things were very different when we made the treaty to which you have referred, as I have just said, but when the very autonomy of one of the contracting parties is destroyed the treaty exists no longer. Now that I am so poor that there are none left to do me reverence, with not a friend in the world, I feel that my proud spirit will not bend to any proposition which implies an obligation."

"Now, Miss Moore, that is the very reason you should accept friendship when it is proffered in good faith. Now you but pine here, and I cannot be happy and see you drudging on in such a lowly place. I need not remind you of your promise, that when the war ended with the subjugation of the South, you would listen to me."

"Neither is the South conquered yet, sir, nor, I trust, are all the brave men dead who were fighting her battles. Some may be dead in memory forever as they ought to be, but I trust all are not poltroons. I am sorry, sir, you referred to that matter."

"I would not wound your feelings, Miss, and far be it from my purpose to recall unpleasant memories. I was only over zealous in presenting my case. Now you need fresh air and recreation. To-morrow, some gentlemen of the county, with the ladies of their family, will give a fox-hunt. I should very much delight to have you accompany us. Can you not go? You may ride my horse. You know what a fine leaper Ben is. He will carry you quite safely, as he did on a former occasion."

"Colonel Burton, you do not consider what you ask. It is only a few months ago since I lost my parents. How could I partake of pleasures so gay, in so short a time; What would people say who know me? And in your company? They would never cease to lash me with scandal, and they would have a right to do so. Now, let me speak candidly, and tell you that the time has not yet arrived, if it ever should, where you may without a great injury to my feelings, make such a proposition."

Colonel Burton for once bit his lip in vexation and disappointment.

"I sincerely beg your pardon, Miss Moore, and promise you that the next time I have occasion to speak with you on any subject, will be of your appointment. I have tried to avoid any appearance of taking advantage of you, as I swear I have had no such desire. If you have so construed any of my acts, you have made a mistake every time you have done so. If you still look upon me as base-born, as beneath you in

blood, breeding or intellect, let me, craving your forgiveness for past offences, assure you that it shall never be my fault again, should you suffer in future from the same cause." As he said this the Colonel, with his face slightly colored, bowed himself out, mounted his horse, and rode away, leaving Kate Moore with her hands crossed over her lap, and with a countenance more sober and reflective than she had ever before worn.

It was Sunday afternoon; and Kate retired to her room, threw herself on her bed, and fought with contending emotions. Could she ever reconcile her sense of pride with the idea of an intimate friendship with Colonel Burton? That was the question.

She began to realize that she had treated badly the best friend she had in the world. It was not so much a question of would it pay to continue to do so, as, was it right in a moral point of view?

Certainly, Colonel Burton, as an individual, had done nothing towards reducing her to her present condition. On the other hand, he had from the very first endeavored to name her lot as easy as possible, and had done as much as in him lay to avert her misfortunes.

How long ought she to persist in treating him as she had? It was now her destitution which most of all stood in the way of a complete reconciliation. Before it was her exaltation; now it was her debasement. Independent, she could clash swords with him, and if he won, all right. Now to condescend was too much like suing for terms.

With Claude now categorically removed from the field, and Colonel Tom Burton rising fast in social favor and the possession of worldly goods, was it not politic, at least, to receive him with common politeness?

"Am I justified in my position; have I always been right or am I wrong? If I could ever bring my mind to think that my former idea in regard to matters social, religious, and political was incorrect, it would not be difficult to reconsider my feelings toward Colonel Burton. Until I can come to such conclusion, it's no use trying."

Thus she argued to herself until she dropped asleep.

CHAPTER XXI.

JUST BEFORE THE BATTLE.

THE first event of any consequence in the East in 1862, was the battle of Roanoke Island.

The attention of the reader has been once before directed to this insignificant spot. A further description of the place where died one of Virginia's most gallant sons, O. Jennings Wise, son of the general commanding the post, may not be out of place. It lies just within the outer span of beach in Croatan Sound. Its distance from other land is considerable, the nearest being in a due west course to Alligator Swamp, and is known to history as the spot where Sir Walter Raleigh attempted to plant his first colony.

Adopting a very unwise course, General Wise began to fortify this spot early in the present year. Torpedoes were laid in the narrow channel which runs near the island, connecting the Currituck and Pamlico sounds.

On the island itself were constructed two forts, one near the centre and the other at the north end. For the special purpose of reducing this place and gaining access to the sounds the Federals were simultaneously fitting out an expedition at Fortress Monroe, waiting only for the first days of spring to make a descent upon the southern coast through Hatteras Inlet.

It was now about the first of February—a winter month to be sure, and in the North usually as inclement as December, but in South-East Virginia and the Carolinas, owing to the near proximity of the Gulf Stream, so mild that crocuses and violets are in bloom in the open air, and birds mating even as early as the first of the month.

Captain Evans had been up at Nag's Head, shooting duck for the old general, but now that a battle was hourly expected at the island, his solicitude for Sammy would not allow him to be separated from the boy any longer, so that the sixth of February found him scouting with his nephew near the south end of the island, from which direction the Federals were expected to approach.

Recent secret despatches from Fortress Monroe were to the effect that the great Burnside fleet, so long in preparation,

had already left the Capes of Virginia and was on its way to Hatteras. It had been espied the day before off Nag's Head, and was already reported as having entered the sound below, and was at that very moment sailing up in the direction of Roanoke.

At sunset on that day, Captain Evans sent Sammy to the top of a tall pine; and the lad had no sooner reached his elevated perch than he reported a great number of vessels of war and other craft steaming northward and stretching from side to side of the Croatan.

Signaling a vidette, the old seaman sent a despatch to Fort Bartow, the most southern of the forts, and then he and his nephew sat down by the camp-fire to discuss the events of the morrow.

"We uns shall hev werry warm work on this 'ere ireland in less nor two days, Sammy."

"So we uns shall, uncle, and I jist b'lieve it'll come tomorrer."

"No, boy; I kalkerlate not," replied the old sailor, slowly casting his eyes around and upward toward the sky, which was then ablaze with the combined light of moon and stars.

"I'm reclined to think, from the repearance of the firnament, as well as from the bellerin' of the surf, that we shall hev a storm by mornin', in which case they'll likely not give us battle. Them Yankees are in the sound, howsomever, and are not a goin' out 'thout payin' their respects to we uns. They'll give we uns a bresh as sure as you live, Sammy. They've got some ev ther long Toms aboard ev their gunboats what'll wake up the sedge-hens bime-by."

There was silence for a few minutes, when Sammy said in a voice slightly husky:

"I wonder ef *they* knows where we uns is, uncle?"

"Who, Sammy?"

"Why, mammy, and all them on the Eastern Shore."

"Never mind them, Sammy. Please don't mention them. It makes me feel kinder bilious whenever I think of whar we uns is, and how we uns come to be here. And then yer angel mother, Sammy! I tells you, boy, this here is no place for any decent white man to be ef it mought be revoided. But I s'pose it can't be helped, and we uns must sell our lives as dearly as possible when it comes to whether they shall kill us or we shall kill them. Whar we uns 'll be in a few more nights arter this, God in heaven only knows."

"Well, ef we uns is got to go anyway, uncle, I'd jist like to go back to Norfolk once more."

"What fur, Sammy?"

The extremity of the situation had emboldened the youth, and he replied:

"What fur, but to see that little un we fotch across the bay. I think ef I could lay my eyes on her nice face once more I could die right happy."

"This is no time, Sammy, ter hev your mind runnin' arter gals."

"Do you remagine she ar thar yet, uncle?"

"Who, Sammy?"

"Why, that gal, uncle. That un you told me had gone with the Sistern at the horsepital."

Sammy began to be provoked at the old man's stupidity.

"Well, thar is no recasion fer your gittin' out o' humor and snappin' off my head. Ef it'll do you any good ter know it, I do b'lieve she ar thar. But, Sammy, that ar gal are too highfalutin' fer you."

Sammy sat in his usual attitude, gazing into the camp-fire; and to the last remark of his uncle made no reply.

It was a glorious night, warm, pleasant, quiet.

The cohonk of the wild goose out in the sound, the crauking of the long-legged crane as he flapped to his roost in the tall pines, the chatter of the migrating brant, as flock after flock they flew over the island, bound on their northward journey, and the lonesome bugle notes of the distant loon were all the sounds that disturbed the stillness of the night, save the dull moaning of the sullen surf along the outer beach.

Around the camp-fire as it flared up or sank into flameless embers, where the two sad Eastern Shoremen sat, grim shadows flitted in and out among the spectral trees like ghosts of Indians gliding back from their lonely graves, to revisit the scenes of their old hunting ground.

At last, the old man broke the silence.

"This here ireland war haunted in old times. It are the identikal place whar Columbus landed, Sammy, or some ev them people who diskivered this country."

"Sure 'nuff, uncle?"

"Fact, truth, Sammy; and it war on this same ireland that the fust white chile war born inter this Amerikay. Her name war Wirginny Dare, and they say as how when her grandfather went away to England arter more provisions and left the colony here, and when he cum back again they was all gone somewhar towards the Croatan, nobody never knewed whar. Arter that, howsomever, it war allowed that

thar war a milk-white doe on this here ireland, what used to be seen coursin' up and down this beach mongst the other deer whenever they had their hunts; but although many who war considered fust rate shots had a crack at her, nobody could fotch that milk-white doe down.

Thar war an ole Injun a livin' here on this here ireland at that time—a very nice sort of a heathen—who 'lowed ef some hunter would take and mould a silwer bullet and shoot at that milk-white doe with that, they could hit her.

So arter a while one of them rich fellers what used to live here, got a silver ball and put it inter his gun, and the next time they all went a huntin', this rich plantationisher sot himself by the path whar the deer war to pass, and when the flock kum by, sure 'nuff, thar she war, that milk-white doe. Then the man ups and blazes away and down kums the milk-white doe. Then he runs to cut her throat, and when he stoops down with his knife, a glitterin' in his hand, he looks and sees that the face ev that milk-white doe war the face ev that child, Wirginny Dare; and remediately that man turns pale and falls down dead."

Sammy shuddered.

"And they say as how that milk-white doe courses up and down this here ireland yit, and that man what shot her, walks about here lookin' fer her yit."

Sammy shrugged his shoulders, cast his eyes around him, and said in a voice lower and hoarser than usual:

"Hush, uncle, it's too solemcholly here in this place to tell sich yarns. Let's think about something else."

"Yes, I 'low, Sammy, this here is rather a supernat'ral lookin' place anyhow, and it mought be that we uns' ghosts mought be a walkin' round here in less nor two days. It's not all so still and quiet lookin' for nothin'. It's gwine ter be hot work about here 'fore long, Sammy, mark what I say."

"Ef you thinks anything like onto that, uncle, wouldn't it be the properest thing fer we uns to be makin' some plans to rescape, should we 'uns be kotch into a tight place?"

"Which are all very thotful ev a boy ev your age and un derstandin', Sammy; and so I hev already. You know that small gut what makes up on the eastern side ev the ireland back ev the fort, 'bout half-ways from this end ev the ireland to t'other?"

"Yes, uncle, I 'members it. In course I does."

"Well, I'se got a cunner hid in the rushes up that gut thar, and in case times gits too warm, we uns will try and find that ar cunner, and when we uns once gits over onto that ar

beach over thar that milk-white doe couldn't kotch us. You see, Sammy, as I war the one to cause all this here trouble, it is werry meet and proper that I make way ev rescape fer we uns. On that ar beach we uns can soon travel to Norfolk, you see."

At mention of the name of that old city, Sammy's face brightened up with a glow of real joy.

"I does so want ter git back once more to that old town. This here is no healthy place fer we uns noway, uncle. These bogs is full ev ager and fever, and ef we uns stays about here much longer, we 'uns 'll die anyway whether we uns is shot or no," and from a smile of pleasure, the boy's face was elongated to an expression of supreme wisdom.

"I'm reclined ter think, Sammy, thar are somethin' about here wus than ager and fevers by the way them ar skyrockets is a flyin' about down yonder in the sound, a frightenin' all these nice wild fowls away." The old man stood up and looked southward. "I see the lights ev them ar gun boats a gleamin' over the water like sarpents' eyes. It war a werry misfortionable thing fer we uns to git kotch in this awkward predikament, and all my own fault, too, Sammy. Ef I hadn't a gone into them ar varieties that night—well, ef we uns ever gits outten this here scrape, we uns 'll be werry lucky that's sartin. Pile on some ev them pine knots, Sammy, it's gitten kinder cold as the night revances. Them ar wild geese out thar in the sound are a keepin' on a h— ev a noise, I s'pose they is a thinkin' ev goin' away soon, and are a bidden us farewell," and the old man yawned as if he was getting weary.

Sammy did as he was bidden, and the old man spread out his blanket on the ground and threw himself down upon it with a groan, and was soon snoring like a giant. Not so the boy; with his knees in his arms, he sat squatted on a log of wood, the picture of grim despair. No doubt he was thinking of that other time he kept guard by the bay shore, when the Little Sister slept by his watch-fire. Poor boy! he never appreciated his position in life, except when he thought of her. Nor would he then permit such a stern and unwelcome fact to disturb his dream, or demolish the castles which his crude imagination was forever building of the thing which never could come to pass. No matter, they gave him comfort, and like many of our own building, were all the more enchanting because of their improbabilities. The face of the girl was ever present with him. Her voice was in every sound, her features depicted on every object. Like an ever-present

fairy, she gamboled in all his dreams, the central figure in all his crude fancies, and to-morrow or the next day, whenever he should go into battle, her name would be the sign by which he would conquer, or the last to linger on his dying lips. Poor boy! He sat there brooding over these things, while the old man slept and snored, while the solemn surf surging up and down the coast moaned like a disconsolate lioness bereft of her whelps, and the slow weary hours of the night passed away, and the dawn drew nigh, and the moon, already sunk behind the sound, no longer made spectral figures of the scraggy cedars which stood around—sat there nodding over the smouldering coals not altogether heedless of the coming morrow, when ten thousand muskets would be pointed at his devoted head, until the voice of his uncle called him from his cramped position, his long gray coat already soaked with the rain that was falling fast, and the leaden clouds quick flying overhead, presaging a wet and gloomy day.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BATTLE.

When the dull morning had dawned sufficiently for the two scouts to see objects well at a distance, there appeared in the sound, to the southward, a terrible but magnificent sight.

From side to side of the broad Sound spread an unbroken line of advancing vessels. Thirty-five gun-boats led the van, followed by more than that number of transports.

Captain Evans shrugged his shoulders and, changing his morning quid from jaw to jaw, turned toward his wet and chilly-looking nephew and remarked:

"We uns here on this ireland are no more nor a muskeeter to them uns what is a comin'. We'll be just nowhar by night, Sammy."

"Are you skeered, uncle?"

"Gineral Jackson, and Pocahontas! Sammy. Do you mean to cast reflections upon your old uncle's bravery. Ef you insinerate such a thing, I'll knock you off your pins in a minute." And the tobacco-juice streamed down the corners of the old man's mouth in rivers.

Sammy was grieved. "I did not mean to 'sinerate on you, uncle. You only misunderstood me. I knows you is as brave

as a lion. I only meant to ask ef you thought them Yankees was gwine to squelch us people here on the ireland.

"That's jest what I was a sayin' a moment ago," replied the old man, very much mollified by the humble manner of his relative. "But as fer fear, Sammy, that remotion never entered this breast," and the chest of the old sailor sounded hollow with the self-inflicted blow.

A vidette rode up.

"Well; how is times at t'other end, horseman?"

"We're going to stand our ground, old man. How many do you make out in yon fleet?"

"Do yer mean men or wessels, sir?"

"Vessels, of course. I didn't suppose you could count the men."

"Thar are nigh onto a hundred, sir. How many men hev we on the ireland?"

"About fifteen hundred, more or less. We are expecting reinforcements from Nag's Head; but we can lick them fellows coming yonder with what we have here now. One good Southerner is good for at least five Yankees."

"Thar are at least ten thousand men in that ar fleet, sir."

"Well, my good fellow, that's only a little over six to one. That's nothing. We have ten big guns at Fort Bartow, and as many as fourteen at the other batteries; so let 'em come, we are ready for them."

"Yes, and you may bet your sweet life they are a comin', sergeant; so you kin get to rights jest as early as you kin, with your six men."

"Then I'll bid you good-morning, old gentleman, and ride back as fast as possible, and report to Captain Wise. He is in charge of the outposts. We shall have something to do before we meet again, I guess."

"And I don't guess anything about it, sergeant, I knows it; and if I hain't a right smart mistaken, you'll hev a pretty tough wrastle with your six men 'ginst that fleet. A man what has traveled, Sammy, knows more 'en one what hasn't," and the old man shook the wet from his tarpaulin hat and took another look at the advancing squadrons.

Ere he had taken his eyes from that direction, there curled out, from the bow of the gunboat in the centre of the line, a volume of gray smoke, from the midst of which, like the fiery tongue of a serpent, there leaped forth a quick, sharp flash, and almost instantly, as if tearing the damp morning air into shreds, a shell went shrieking and plunging over the heads of the old man and the boy, bursting in the midst of the isl-

and with an explosion that waked the brakes and bogs from their quiet repose, sent the cranes crauking from their roosts, and frightening the wild-fowl in the sound; its echo careering and reverberating from shore to shore, until it died away with a sort of guttural warning, far up the distant Albemarle.

Sammy dropped upon the ground like a frightened pullet at the shadow of a passing bird.

"I tell you what, that's a right smart squealer, Sammy, and ef that ar had a hit we uns, it would a sent us to the sweet by-and-by, my boy," remarked the old man, dryly. Then, observing the boy lying on the ground, pale and trembling, he resumed:

"I pities you, my boy, most 'cause you would not hev been here, but fer me. May God forgive me ef we uns gits hurt this day," then pausing a moment, he went on talking. "But it's no use a mindin' it. We uns is in it, and must take the conserquences. So, let's git we uns' breakfast afore them fellers comes too nigh to make cookin' and eatin' comfortable. Them taters you put into the fire last night ought to be done by this time." Saying which, the two huddled round the remains of their smoldering camp-fire, now nearly extinguished by the steadily falling rain, and scratching among the coals, raked out several yams, of which the old man partook heartily, but Sammy refused to touch a mouthful.

"My stomach is rather weak this mornin', uncle."

"I'm werry sorry, my son, but you had a better stuff yourself with these here taters. You'll be hungry afore you gits a chance at em agin."

Meanwhile, the fleet was looming up in regular order with the intention of engaging the rebel fleet, and by the time Captain Evans had finished his breakfast, the naval action had begun, and the smoke of battle was hanging dismally o'er sound and shore.

The little fleet of Confederate gun-boats, seven in number, gradually fell back before the heavier metal and superior force of the attacking party as the Federal line advanced until their gun-boats had come within range of the guns of Fort Bartow, when that stronghold added its thunder to the already deafening roar of artillery.

From that time forth the fight became general, the Federals dividing their attention between the fleet of the enemy and their batteries on shore, and the Confederates pouring in their usually effective fire from shore and sound.

Captain Evans and Sammy remaining at the south end of the island, stood out of danger, eager spectators of the stirring scene.

"The time will come for we uns ter take a hand when them fellows makes up ther minds ter land. We'll kinder loiter about here whilst they trow their bombs and things around loose. I tell you what, Sammy, it are a magnifercent sight to behold."

From early in the morning until late into the night the bombardment went on; but as the day closed it was quite evident that the advantage gained was on the side of the Federals. The latter had suffered some, but the little navy of the Confederates was badly shattered. One of their gunboats was sunk and several others disabled, so that when the darkness set in the remaining vessels withdrew and steamed away up the Albemarle Sound to Pasquotank river, and proceeded to Elizabeth City.

Already the ammunition at Fort Bartow was exhausted, and the Federals had only to turn their attention to the land forces with the coming of another day.

To our two friends thus far, the fighting had only been an interesting spectacle. A few random shots had been thrown over their heads into the thick swamp beyond. Other than this they had occupied a place of almost entire safety. But they had seen enough to try the courage of the stoutest heart.

Their ears had become somewhat familiarized with the tumult of battle. They had all day long traced the fiery trail of reeking shell, their flying fragments attended by terrific explosions, as they tore into the sides of the reeling gunboats, they had seen the falling spars, and the red fire-fiend climbing up the rigging of the vessels; the struggling seamen clinging to the floating debris, and been thrilled by the defiant shouts of the enraged combatants, and the outcry of the wounded; but all this had little in it to brace them up for the hand-to-hand conflict which must inevitably take place on the next day.

Sad and silent they sat that night by their disguised campfire, which they had builded further back in the woods. They ate little and conversed less; the old man sitting with his broad jaws clinched like a vise upon his quid, and the boy in hopeless expectation, finding no consolation in the stern and altered mood of his uncle, with his wet blanket about his shoulders, shivering by his side.

As the night wore away, the latter, yielding to the depres-

sion of mind under which he was laboring, lay down and slept in his wet clothing; but Captain Evans still sat there, sometimes silent and at other times murmuring to himself.

"This is werry misfortionable. I wouldn't care a picayune fur this ole superannuated carcass ef it warn't fer the boy. He's too young and tender fer this business, and to-morrow—" Then the old fellow would shake his head and cover his face with his broad and rugged hands. Then, as if awakened from a dream, he would suddenly exclaim:

"I'll eat my head ef I don't believe his angel mother are a hoverin' round us this werry minute. I wonder ef she will ever see her boy agin?"

A while after midnight he waked the boy and started up the island. When near the centre he found that all was business and excitement there. The forces of the batteries had combined, and behind a broad morass, which lay at the distance of a few rods in the rear of Fort Bartow, they had thrown up a masked redoubt, in the midst of a thick growth of scrub cedars and cypress, flanked on either wing by the soft, oozy swamp of the glade. Here they intended to make a last and final stand, and by throwing out pickets in front, lead the enemy into the morass and within the reach of their ambuscade.

All night long of the 7th, they worked like beavers, arranging and completing their works and forming their picket line.

When Captain Evans and the boy reached the neighborhood of the redoubt at about two o'clock in the morning, they were met by Captain Wise and appointed to duty on the extreme left, as pickets in the swamp, with orders to fire and retreat. Their respective positions were within calling distance of each other. As they filed off to their places in the darkness, the old man cast a wistful gaze after the boy, and turning his back to hide his emotion, said, "Ef times get too hot fer you, my boy, hover in towards me, and don't git outten the way, and don't forgit the cunner. She lies in the gut over thar. Don't forgit the cunner."

The sun had scarcely cleared the beach, before the expedition under cover of the gun-boats began to land, first assaulting the deserted fort and then advancing into the morass.

Reckoning well upon the character of the ground, each soldier had been furnished with a piece of board which, serving as a portable pontoon, enabled them to advance with facility toward the position occupied by the Confederates. A brisk picket fire began; and as the Federals advanced

they flanked the old man and the boy, cutting them off from their friends, and coming in between them and the redoubt.

In attempting to close up toward the right they came in contact with the right wing of the Federal line, as the straggling soldiers with their planks were struggling through the swamp.

Sammy being on the right of his uncle was the first to discover their position, and picking out his man, opened fire. His aim was accurate, and the Yankee reeled over into the mud with a splash.

The report, which called Captain Evans to the side of his nephew, brought also half a dozen Federals to the spot, and the contest was to be decided between two on one side and six on the other.

"You've waked up the hornets, Sammy, and we must look out fer 'em, my boy. They is a swarmin' fer us."

This was all the old man had time to say. But there was no need of encouraging words. The youth seemed suddenly to have developed into the full stature of a veteran. Even before his less active companion could get ready for action, by securing a position to get in an effective shot, Sammy, with his repeating rifle had stretched out three of his assailants, badly wounded or dead. By this time others of the attacking party hearing the firing, began to swarm in that direction, and the position of our two friends became extremely perilous.

"Hadn't we uns better drap back?" hinted the old man, excitedly.

But Sammy seemed deaf. The old man's suggestion was not heard or fell unheeded upon his ear. As fast as a man approached he was sure to be shot down. But still they came. The balls whistled by the heads of the two beleagured pickets as thick as hail, chipping off the twigs, and spattering their faces with the soft mud of the morass, as they fell at their feet, from the random firing of the advancing column.

The old man was not long idle. Fixing himself behind a large cypress, and urging Sammy to take the same precaution, he loaded and fired with almost as much celerity and execution as his nephew. The first six men were all disposed of, but six, ay, twice six had come to their rescue, only to meet a like fate, when, exasperated to frenzy, the reinforced enemy made up their minds that the only way to dislodge their two foes, was to order a charge and route them at the point of the bayonet.

Six soldiers leaped to the unequal contest.

The old man fired two shots and as many men fell to the ground. Sammy's piece missed fire.

The remaining four rushed on over the quaggy ground, leaping from tussock to tussock, fearless and desperate. And now a crisis, such as the old man and the lad had never before encountered, was at hand.

"This is a rather misfortionable predickament, Sammy. Hadn't we better surrender?"

"Stand your ground, uncle," was all the boy said, as he readjusted his rifle, and beginning afresh, brought one of the charging party to his knees.

Nothing daunted, the remaining three dashed on, and in a moment were lunging at Sammy, whose barricade was standing a little in advance of that of his uncle.

In attempting to shun the thrust of one, the poor boy encountered the bayonet of the other on the opposite side of the tree. It struck him in the right side, piercing him between the ribs. As he sank to the ground, he turned a piteous, imploring look at the old man.

With a cry and a leap like that of a wild beast, the old fellow sprang forward, and turning the butt end of his rifle, struck down two of the men, one after the other, and snatching the musket from the side of the prostrate lad, drove it with a lunge into the last of the three men, who was stuck in the mud, and raising the wounded boy in his brawny arms, ran with him with all his might to the right and rear.

Fifty bullets sped after him, but he seemed to bear a charmed life. Leaping from hammock to hammock, and knowing his ground perfectly, it was no trouble for him to distance his pursuers. In fact they had no desire to rush after him, as they knew not what dangers lay in front, or how many such men and boys as they had already encountered were peopling the woods beyond. The warm blood of the youth trickled down over the hand of the old man.

"My God! he is bleeding to death! This is misfortionable, but it will never do." Seeing that he was out of immediate danger, he laid down his pale burden, and tearing his own shirt into bands, bound up the ugly wound as well as he could, and re-shouldering him, went on. It seemed to Captain Evans that all the energies of his whole lifetime had come back to him to serve him in this trying emergency.

Behind him the battle was now raging with demoniacal fury. He heard, but heeded not, the shouts of the assailants. The moaning of the wounded boy goaded him on. "And jist to think it war all my own fault," he would ejaculate as he ran.

He reached the canoe, panting like an ox in summer time, and drenched with perspiration, mire and blood. Down in the bottom, on some leaves and dried grass, he laid the boy, and putting his shoulder to the end of the boat, slid her down into the gut, and jumping in, seized an oar and shoved for the strait. By this time the firing at the redoubt had ceased, only the desultory report of a rifle now and then could be heard, but flying wildly in every direction ran the routed rebels.

Standing up on the stern seat, so as to make good use of the strong south wind which was blowing, he sailed up the Currituck. When he had placed a sufficient distance between himself and the island, he turned round to take one more last look at the ill-fated place. Shaking his clenched fist in that direction, he exclaimed: "Fight on, now, yer miserable brutes. Never will Revel Evans or any of his kith and kin raise another arm in sich a slauterin' business." Then going to the boy, who seemed to be asleep, he knelt down by him and kissed him over and over again, weeping as he did so. "Like onto a drum with his throat cut, lyin' in the bottom of the cunner. Oh, this is werry misfortionable. My poor boy! my poor boy!

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RETREAT.

WHOLLY indifferent as to the result of the battle, and thinking only of the bleeding boy who had fought so bravely, Captain Evans sped on his northward course up the Currituck.

Had the boy not been hurt, it was his intention to land on the beach and walk up, crossing Princess Ann County to Norfolk. As it was, he thought he would reach the canal if possible, and following that, go on by water to the place of destination, if his wounded boy could hold out so long. Day was yet young; and although the distance to the farther end of the sound was long, yet the old sailor hoped to reach land by night.

With an extra oar and his overcoat, he improvised a mast and sail, and standing himself in the stern, the narrow craft shot through the water like an arrow. He had lost his hat in the battle, and his bald head and gray locks were exposed

to the scuds of rain which the south-west wind was constantly sending up behind. But little cared he for this. Sorrow and remorse filled his heart with a terrible anguish. "All my own fault; all my own fault," he continually muttered. "I swear, here in the presence of that poor boy and God Almighty, that while I live I will never touch another drop of liquor. And jist to remagine that that precious blood has got to be spilt fer niggers! Ef Jeff Davis war only here, or any other instigator ev this infernal war, I'd settle his hash fer him in less nor a minnit. Ef I only had my boy back safe and well as he was two hours ago, their old Southern Confederacy might go to blazes for what I care."

Sammy groaned and opened his eyes. His tongue was cleaving to the roof of his mouth. He could only articulate:

"Water, uncle, water."

"That you shall, my baby," tenderly responded the old man, dropping his oar, and striding to the bow of the canoe he drew out from under the forward seat a jug of water, a bottle of whisky, and some roasted potatoes.

"This are not werry fresh, my boy, but it is the best I have. Bending down on his knees, he raised Sammy, resting his head on his arm, proffering at the same time a gourd full of the stale fluid which had been a week ago tolerable water.

The boy clutched the gourd nervously, and emptied it without taking it from his head.

"Will you have some of the whisky, my boy; not that I want ter tempt yer to drink, but only by the way of medicine."

But Sammy shook his head with a faint smile and whispered, "Mother," as a tear glistened in his eye.

"God forgive me," groaned his uncle, throwing the bottle into the sound.

Then, brushing the tear away, the boy continued:

"But I shall never see her again," and saying this, the wounded lad sank into a stupor from which the old man's groaning aroused him after several minutes. Opening his eyes he asked:

"Where are we, uncle? Are the Yankees arter us, and is you hit too?"

"No, my baby. I wish I war."

"Then why do you cry, uncle."

"To see you hurt, and to think I war the cause ev it all."

"But, uncle, please don't think ev that any more. You is a good, kind uncle to me, and allus treated me good. Don't

cry uncle, I'm not sufferin' much. We uns has had many a grand time together."

The old man cried more and more.

"Lay me down easy, uncle; my right side is stiff and sore."

"I know it am, honey. Let me fix it up fer you better."

So saying, he threw off his coat and vest, and cutting out the lining of the latter with his pocket-knife, made a soft pad of it, and cutting away the boy's clothing, washed the clotted blood off the wound—an awful gash—from which the red life stream was still oozing. He dipped the pad in the water and bound it over the wound, closing it as best he could, tying the bandage tight.

Then making a place for him nearer the bow of the boat, he took him up tenderly in his arms, and removed him where the sun, should he shine out, would not fall on his face.

The old man's little nursing was duly appreciated by nature, which responded to his efforts by sending the sufferer to dream-land almost immediately. The canoe needed the trailing oar, and Captain Evans was soon at his post again. The wind was yet fresh, and the boat fairly flew on her way; but not rapidly enough for her distressed captain. In the examination of the wound, he had sagacity sufficient to perceive that it was a ghastly one, and needed the best medical attention and careful nursing or the boy would perish. He was calculating the time it would take him to reach the shore, where he might obtain temporary assistance, which he was making up his mind would be early in the evening, when suddenly the wind and rain both ceased, the clouds passed seaward, and the sun burst forth in meridian splendor.

Never was fair weather more unwelcome.

"This is worry misfortionable," groaned the old man as he sat down on the seat and rubbed his head with his rough palm. It grew hot. The water in the jug became tepid in temperature. The boy awoke fairly choking with thirst. The old man arose and redoubled his efforts, trying to make up for wind in the vigorous strokes of the oar which he put over the stern-post of the boat, and propelled her onward as only a Chesapeaker can. He had yet a long way to go. Far off in the distance ahead, the shadowy outlines of the cypress trees at the head of the sound appeared to stand on the surface of the now gloomy water. Still the old man sculled away, rocking the dugout like a cradle, as he swayed his brawny body to and fro, the bead-like drops of perspiration

rolling from his head and face like water. Neither the booming of guns, now far behind, nor the heartless sight of miles of water between him and the shore, caused him for a moment to relax his energies.

The sun blazed hotter, and the air became more stifling; but steadily onward he toiled, his swaying body vibrating with the regularity of a pendulum.

The boy became restless. He began to grow delirious. His wild and incoherent mutterings only nerved the bare and hairy arms which held the pliant oar, with new power as they fell on the old man's ear with excruciating painfulness.

Hours passed by; still the swish, swish, swish, swish of the sculling went on. The sun began to decline, and was finally obscured by a dark blueish cloud which hung over the placid sound in the far-away west. A storm was brewing, and the low growling of distant thunder was heard; but it broke not the spell of the old man's exertions.

All this time the boy was getting worse. The quieting effects of the shock were giving way to the first onslaught of fever.

Daylight shut in prematurely. Eastward, over the beach, the sky was serene; but in the opposite direction, a cloud, such as rises hastily in this latitude after the heat of a sultry day in springtime, was rapidly rising. They were too far from shore to reach it in time to avert the storm. A louder peal of thunder rolled over the lonely voyagers, dying away in the purple east. It roused the boy from his feverish dream, to a recumbent position. He gazed wildly around, then tried to stagger to his feet.

"They are comin', uncle. Don't you hear the guns?" A hectic flush was burning on his cheek, and his eyes had an anxious, eager look in them.

"Get behind me, uncle, quick. They will kill you! they will kill you!" he screamed, with all his might. Then, unable to rise, he fell back, crying:

"Oh, my poor mother, I shall never see her again. Take me to the Sisters, uncle; I would see the little un ag'in afore I die."

The old man could stand this no longer. He thought the boy was dying, and running to him, he caught him in his arms, and pressed his hot head to his breast. A bright flash of lightning revealed the pinched features of the lad, as he gazed up into his uncle's face, in a sort of dazed manner.

"What can I do for you, my boy, what can I do?"

"Nothing, uncle; leave me, and save yourself. They are coming, uncle, they are coming."

The storm was, if the Yankees were not, and it struck the boat with the force of a tornado, almost engulfing the frail bark and its luckless crew in a flood of spray. The rain poured down in torrents. The brackish waves broke over the canoe from stem to stern. The roaring wind put to silence the voice of the thunder. To save the boat and attempt to take care of the boy, was too much for one person. Fertile in resources in times of danger like this, the old man determined to do what made his very heart bleed while he did it.

Seizing the painter, he unraveled the twists of the rope, and bound the lad hand and foot; then covering him as best he could with the overcoat, went back to his post.

Fortunately, the wind blew squarely from behind, but with the force of a hurricane. The lightning flashed; the tempest howled; but through the gloom the little boat, guided by the master-hand of her commander, drove northward before the gale, curling the white foam from her sharp bow, and careering on the crest of the newly awakened waves, like a thing of life. All around was impenetrable darkness, save where the red lightning flashing seemed to set the sound on fire. The boy groaned, and muttered, and shrieked in his delirium. The crimsoned water in the boat slashed from side to side, and soaked his prostrate body through and through.

Sweet blessing in disguise! The rain had helped the boy, and restored the old man to his equilibrium. It tarried not long, but soon spent its fury, passing over toward the beach, and losing itself in the ocean. The moon rose cheery from behind its retreating outlines; the stars came out; the water no longer lashed the sides of the canoe, which, toward morning, quietly glided into a placid nook, under and among the tall cypresses, as the gray strata of coming dawn gleamed through the forest vista, and the old man sank down in the stern of the boat. When the sun arose, it found them both sleeping.

PART V.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN IMPORTANT SECRET OUT.

THE Federal fleet sailed up the Albemarle Sound, after reducing Roanoke Island, whence the Confederate gun-boats had repaired the night before, sunk them in the Pasquotank, and captured Elizabeth City. From this point their land forces began to march upon Norfolk. Henceforth the city-by-the-sea was doomed.

The battle of Roanoke Island took place on the 8th of February. By that time another plan was being devised to attack the aforesaid city by land and water from Fortress Monroe. There was but one source of hope for the twin cities, and but one great difficulty to be overcome by the Federals, and that was the "Merrimack." All possible dispatch was now being made to finish this wonderful vessel, which was to be at once a boon and a terror. Alas, for Norfolk! The sound of revelry had ceased within her borders. The days of her glory were departing, and nothing but eager preparation, and a fearful looking for of impending evil was apparent.

Menaced from sea and land, threatened from all sides, no one could predict what a day would bring forth. Having in view the temper of Claude Walsingham, when he left the Eastern Shore only a few months previously, one would naturally expect to find him all alert for the coming struggle, active in preparations for defence, eager for the fray. Surely there was enough to engage the services of the most inert, not to mention such enthusiastic partisans as he appeared to be at the breaking out of the war.

The fact is, he had done little or no service since his arrival in Norfolk. Once, in company with other members of the staff, he had visited Sewall's Point, on a visit of inspection, he had on one or two occasions been bearer of dispatches to Crany Island, and the entrenched camp. All the rest of his time he had given to Miss Buttercup. But, strange to say, while love adds vigor to any good cause, and women glory in

martial achievements, exciting to industry in times of peace and valor in times of war, stimulating one's estimate of virtue, and strengthening all honorable intentions, that *liaison* of his with the sorceress of Freemason Street had only the effect to emasculate, enervate and debase, and that which ought to sweeten toil, deepen patriotism and beget endurance had proved in his case a demoralizer of every attribute of manhood, crushed out every noble impulse and made of a once chivalrous young man, a regular Sardanapalus.

To find out a man's character, we have no better guide than the old and often proved method of investigating the qualities and habits of those with whom he associates. We not only take physical diseases from our companions, but their moral ailments also; for moral ideas are as catching as the itch, and we can no more expose ourselves to the pernicious atmosphere which surrounds and emanates from a human soul, than share the same bed with an infected human being, and not become contaminated.

Was Claude's patriotism growing cold? Yes. So was that of Miss Buttercup. She was intelligent—very, and saw farther ahead than other men and women, no doubt, because she was more selfish and mercenary. Times were getting hard in Norfolk, money scarce, or if plenty, of little value. Claude's exchequer was in a bankrupt condition, and his salary hypothecated for several months in advance. His liberality had caused him to neglect his person, and his clothing was beginning to be threadbare.

If Miss Buttercup was fast, she was not a fool. The signs of the times were not propitious for those who believe in the doctrine of making friends of the mammon of ungodliness, that when others fail they may be received into everlasting habitations. She thought, in the sporting language of her own day, with which she was well acquainted, it began to be time to "hedge." With Norfolk full of handsome Federal officers, with their pockets full of greenbacks, and she in bad odor with them on account of political affiliations with the Confederacy, would never do.

Claude was pretty well used up, so also to her astute mind was the Confederacy. It was as easy for her to part with one as the other. She was, in truth, so far a Christian, that she was ready to be every thing to any body, so she might save herself. If she had been queen during the days of rebellion, she determined to be empress under the new regime when it was ushered in.

"Claude," she said, "I want you to do me a favor."

"Well," he replied, "you know, Queenie, you have only to speak and I am at your service. What is it I can do for you?"

"I want you to find out for me at once when the "Virginia" (they called the "Merrimac" by that name), will be launched."

"By my soul, Queenie, you have a large curiosity. What on earth do you wish to know that for?"

"Oh, only a woman's fancy."

"Suppose when I make inquiry they should suspect me of having sinister motives, Queenie? It might get me into a peck of trouble."

"Is it possible that Captain Claude Walsingham, the high-toned and honorable officer from the Eastern Shore, has so far lost caste, as to be even suspicioned of having treacherous motives? It is thus I am rewarded for all the sacrifice I have made for you, that you can refuse a request so simple. Upon my word, Claude Walsingham, you grow shorter every day, in more senses than one."

Claude winced, and that was all. Samson was shorn of his locks, and it only required that his eyes be burned out, and he was ready to be hitched up to grind corn in the mill.

"Now, Queenie," he retorted in a leering, swaggering manner, "please let up a little, won't you? Don't you think you are a little hard on a fellow? You are too previous, my dear. I did not refuse you; I only hinted at the advisability of the thing."

"For you to question the propriety of granting a request of mine is too cruel for anything. You are a mean, ungrateful wretch, Claude Walsingham, and I wish I had never seen you. I might have had plenty of rich and generous friends. General Vincent, Major Reet, Major Griswool, and lots of others, if I hadn't thrown myself away on you. Oh you hateful thing!" and she turned away and walked to the window, weeping hysterically.

"Please, Queenie, do not take on so about nothing. You don't know how badly it hurts me to see you act in this manner. There, now, don't you know I will do anything for you? Come, don't let us quarrel. Get your wine and let us drink friends."

She pushed him from her indignantly.

In a moment the blood mounted to his temples, and a flash of the old fire shot forth from his swollen eyes. Miss Buttercup saw it and softened, She changed her tactics. Going up to him, she put her plump, round arms about his neck and kissed him on his indignant mouth.

"There, now, Claudie, I am sorry. I did not mean to treat you badly."

"But you are very scornful."

"Pardon me, Claudie, it's only a woman's freak. I will not do so again. Come, let us drink friends. But you will tell me, won't you, Claudie? Here is some very old peach brandy, sent me by a friend in Princess Ann. He writes me it is fifty years old, and as mellow as a June apple. Don't be afraid of it, Claudie, it won't hurt you. Take a good drink and then go over to the navy yard, and find out for me when the "Virginia" will be ready, won't you, Claudie? Yes, I know you will, darling; and come right back and tell me. There, that'll make you feel better; and when you get back—well—you shall have another, and a—and a kiss, dear Claudie."

In an hour Claude was back again, but just able to walk alone. Miss Buttercup met him at the hall door. He tried to kiss her, but she put him off, her face betraying more disgust than she would have allowed, if Claude had not been too drunk to perceive it.

"Come into the parlor, ninny. Well, you've got back, I see. Did you find out anything?"

Claude was sulky.

"Are you deaf? What's the matter with you?"

"You—hic—called—hic—me a—hic—ninny."

"No, you misunderstood me."

"What—hic—did you call—hic—me, then?"

"Oh, nothing, Claude. Now, you are ready to quarrel again. Come, tell me what you know."

"You—hic—won't let me—hic—kiss you."

"Oh, yes, I will. Here, kiss me all you like; only, tell me if you found out anything, and don't keep me in suspense all day."

"Fetch me another—hic—swallow—hic—of that old peach—hic—Queenie—hic—and I will."

"Sure?"

"Yes—hic—sure."

"Now, don't take so much; you have enough already. Now, Claudie, you'll go to sleep presently and forget it. Why, look at you! you are nodding already." She shook him by the shoulders.

"What—hic—do you—hic—want, Queenie?"

"I want you to tell me when the "Virginia" will be launched."

"Well—hic—Queenie,—hic—pour me out—hic—another glass of the brandy."

"Not a drop more until you tell me what I want."

"Well—hic—Queenie,—what do you—hic—want to know?"

"Fool, dunce, tell me when the "Virginia" will be launched, or I'll smash you. Do you hear?"

Claude leered up at his Queenie. She was standing in a threatening attitude, a position known to the colored gentry as "squared off." He measured her up and down; tried, in his dazed condition, to read her intentions, tried to reflect as to his ability to defend himself, and, coming to the conclusion that discretion was the better part of valor, he said:

You're—hic—crazy to—hic—get mad about—hic—nothing. I meant—hic—to tell you—hic—all the—hic—time. She will—hic—she—will—hic—"

"Speak it out, or I'll——"

"Yes, I will—hic—if you will—hic—give me time. On—hic—the 8th—hic—of—hic—"

"Of March?"

"Yes."

"Now, you drunken fool, you may go to sleep, and never wake, for what I care."

In five minutes Claude was snoring on the sofa, and Miss Buttercup inditing the following note:

To General John E. Wool,
Commanding Fortress Monroe.

Sir,

I beg to inform you that the ironclad "Virginia" will be completed and launched by the 8th prox. If Mr. Ericsson's vessel can be ready by that time, all may be well; if not, look out for trouble, as she is said to be a very formidable craft.

The Confederates are very much depressed over the loss of Roanoake Island and Elizabeth City.

The same colored man will take this who took my other note. You will see that he is attended to and sent across the James at Newport News, so he can return to Norfolk.

I have the honor to be,
Your obedient servant,
Martha.

Touching a silver bell, she called a servant.

"Tell Uncle Jim to come up."

The order was obeyed, and a ragged-looking negro, dressed as an oysterman, doffing his hat and bowing, soon made his appearance at the door.

"Are you ready, Jim?"
"Yes, marm."
"You understand where you are to go?"
"Your sarvent, marm."
"To Fortress Monroe."
"Ef I live, marm."
"How do you go this time?"
"Down de river, marm, arter night, in a cunner."
"That's right. Now, take this letter to General Wool, all safe and sound, and you'll be well fixed when you get your freedom, which won't be long. Good-bye."
"Your sarvent, marm."

CHAPTER XXV.

A CASE OF KIDNAPPING.

WHETHER it was the name in the ring or no, which had so affected the Little Sister, her sympathetic companion did not take time to inquire, but laying her on the bed, proceeded to restore her to consciousness, which did not require much time or attention, the former recovering almost instantly after being put in a horizontal position.

Her strange behavior was charged to loss of animation, due to a weak state of nervous prostration, and nothing further was thought of it by the faithful attendant.

The novice proved to be an apt scholar, and very soon mastered the catechism, and learned to say all the Hail Marys, count the beads, and go through the many forms required by the church of her adoption, with as much ease and grace as if she had been brought up in that faith.

Sister Irene was instant in season and out of season, a constant companion, and a most agreeable one. Only a little older than the other, herself educated and of good family, the companionship was such as only two of a like mind and manners were mutually capable of forming.

Sister Irene had so lately been an inhabitant of the gay outside world, that she had not yet worn out its impressions or been able entirely to forget its ways, or overcome its influences. In other words, the issues of life had not all been turned into the channel of religious thought.

Now and then in spite of herself, would burst forth an uncontrollable, natural sentiment, more colored and forceable from having been restrained. These little ebullitions were

diversions for the younger Sister, and brought her companion more on a level with her, making her appear all the more natural and lovable.

The Little Sister employed much of her time in reading the books furnished her by the good priest of St. Mary's, but was permitted to attend the sick and do other duties incumbent upon the Sisters of the institution.

As a nurse, it was soon found that she was a decided success, and a great favorite with the inmates. Wherever she went it was as if a bright light was shed abroad by her sweet presence; for she carried a light, but affectionate heart into the sick chamber, and joy and hope were her hand-maidens.

"Send me the Little Sister, please, she is so sweet." "Where is that little lady who sat up with me last night?" "I want her." "Please do let her come again," were expressions heard every day in the sick-rooms of the hospital. She was ever busy, but the great burden of her soul seemed to be to save from ruin the victim of Miss Buttercup. The story of Sister Irene had awakened a deeper interest in his fate, and if possible, a stronger desire to rescue him. If she had known how rapidly that young man was circling to his destiny as a moth around a candle, how he had been taken up drunk on the street, tried by a court-martial and cashiered, she would have been even more alarmed for his safety than she was. But such things had actually occurred, and although Claude was at first repentant, and refrained from drink a day or two, shutting himself up in his room, and giving himself up to reflections of the most unpleasant sort; yet God's spirit does not always strive with man, and Claude's repentance had come too late. He had got far enough on the road to reformation, however, to accuse himself of more than one serious fault, and when comparing Miss Buttercup's qualities with those of Kate Moore, had really been dumbfounded at his own folly. The weight was too heavy for him to carry. His nerves grew weak and shaky; his throat and tongue dry as powder; his thirst, furious. He could not sleep. He lost his appetite. He wanted nothing so much as whisky, and whisky he must have or die.

He rushed from his room like a madman, with clenched fists and glaring eyes, and in less than an hour was again in the gutter.

The two nuns at St. Vincent de Paul had not lost sight of the object of their solicitude. They soon learned of his disgrace, and as it had to come, saw, beyond his fall, a ray of hope and a means of escape. They had written him warning

letters, they had induced gentlemen friends to warn him of his perils; but all their efforts had been unavailing. Still, they knew no such word as despair, and were constantly apprised of his whereabouts through the services of a negro man whom they hired to look after him.

Fortune not only favors the brave, but God helps those who are trying to do good.

What they had failed to accomplish by the aid of all their best laid plans, was brought about by an accident.

As their hired man was returning from market on the day of Claude's last fiasco, he came upon that unfortunate gentleman as he lay on the street, his face upturned to the spring sky, and his clothing in a condition not very respectable for persons in good society.

The negro recognizing him at once waked him up, assisted him to his feet, and taking his arm determined to escort him to the hospital.

"Dis is no good place for you, Mas' Captain. So you jes' come long, wid me. You is in a bad fix."

"Yes—hic—hold on to me you black scoundrel, and—hic—take me to my room."

"Oh yes, Mas' Captain I'll take yer to yer room. You jes' hold fast ter me."

"By —— You're a liar, you are taking me—hic—away from home. I—hic—live at—hic—229 Main—hic—Street."

"That's all right, Mas' Captain, we'll take you dar bimeby. Tain't no use ter kick nor scratch. I'se 'gwine ter take your whar you'll be 'tended to; so you jes' mought as well walk along like a proper gemman. I'se not a 'gwine ter hurt ye at all, and when you comes to yo'self right good, you will tank me mightily fer dis favor. Sister Irene done tole me look out fer you, and I'se' gwine ter do it now I'se got a good chance."

Finding all resistance useless, Claude, cursing and raving, was dragged along, the negro trying to calm him by soft and easy words. By the time they had reached the gate of the big house at the end of Fenchurch Street, Claude was pretty well fagged out. His clothing was torn, his hair disheveled, his limbs sore and bruised by his resistance to the efforts of the strong negro, and altogether he was a used-up individual, completely subdued and as tractable in the hands of his kidnapper as an invalid.

"Now you knows you is a sick man, Mas' Captain, and de hospital is de place for sick folks. De ladies in dar will take good care on you, and when you gits out you'll feel like a bran new brass pin, dat you will, Mas' Captain,'

"Yes, I am very sick. Hold on a minute. I—hic—want to throw up."

"Dat's right, Mas' Captain, get clear ob as much of dat as you can afore you gits whar de ladies am. Hab you got trou? All right, come, along trou dis gate. I will take you inter de 'ception room, and once dem ladies gets you safe in der clutches you is in Hebben.

"For mercy's sake, John, why have you brought that drunken man here?" inquired Sister Matilda, holding up her hands in holy horror.

"He no drunk, Miss 'Tilda, he's as sicker man as ever you seed. Got de cholora I b'lieve."

"Holy Mary, deliver us," exclaimed Sister Matilda.

Sister Irene entered, followed by the Little Sister.

"See, Ma'am, he can't hold his head up, he is so sick."

"But his breath, John!"

"Oh, yes, ma'am, his breff smells like brandy 'cause dey give him dat fer de stomach-ache."

"Who gave him brandy?"

"His friens, ma'am his friens."

"Who are his friends, John, and why did they not come with him?"

John looked a little puzzled. Sister Irene looked at him knowingly.

"I does not know who dey is. I can't be 'spected ter know everybody, Miss 'Tilda. Dey say, 'take dis gemman to de hospital. Tell em we'll be 'long dat way ter-night. Dat's all John knows, Miss, 'cepts dat I fotched him."

"I do not know what to do about this. Is Father O'Farrel in the hospital?"

"Yes, I think he is," replied the Little Sister."

"Tell him to step here, please."

The priest soon put in his appearance.

"Father, this man has been sent here by some one. I cannot find out who, what shall I do with him?"

The priest looked at Claude compassionately and replied:

"He looks like an officer and appears to be quite ill. You had better send him to a room, his friends will probably be along presently. Should they not arrive, however, and he need the services of a physician, you may order the hospital surgeon; this is my advice," and so saying, the priest, who was going out, bade the Sisters good-bye, and walked from the room and down the stone steps, while John with the help of the two gleeful sisters hustled their prisoner off to a room on the third floor, and put him to bed. But

surprises like misfortunes are twin-born. It was not many minutes before the Little Sister was summoned to the hall. Leaving Sister Irene in charge of the weary Claude she hastened down stairs. An ambulance had driven up to the gate. Staggering under the weight of a tall, limp, red-headed lad whose trowsers and coat were stiff with blood, an old man whose face wore an expression of the deepest distress, clambered up the long stone steps and entered the hospital.

There was a settee in the hall and upon that the old man carefully rested his apparently lifeless burden; and staggering to a chair himself as if completely overcome, he said:

"Ladies, this is werry misfortionable. Thar is my poor boy. Save him ef you kin. We uns is from Roanoke Island, and we uns is werry tired."

There were several of the Sisters present, and they gathered round the old man to hear his tale of woe.

In a moment the Little Sister recognized the pair as Captain Evans and Sammy.

"I know those people, they are my friends," she exclaimed, to Sister Matilda. Then turning to Captain Evans:

"My dear old friend, do pray tell me what has happened?"

"Stabbed, my little un, stabbed with a Yankee bagonet at Roanoke Island. He sed as how he wanted to see you afore he died, and I have fotched him all the way—mostly on my back. T'ware all my own fault. Poor boy," and then the old man's feelings overcame him. Sister Matilda was kneeling by the side of the settee.

"Go see ef he are yit alive," said the Captain to the Little Sister. "Ef he isn't altogether gone he will rewive ef he knows you is nigh unto him."

The Little Sister crossed over to the place were the boy was lying, just as the old man had laid him, and Sister Matilda was holding his cold purple hand.

She pressed her hand to his brow. The touch seemed to arouse him, and he partially raised his eyelids.

"Do you know me, Sammy?"

The Little Sister was shocked at his emaciated appearance, as he raised his dull, heavy eyes, looking at the high ceiling, then up and down the long bare hall at the Sisters in their snow white cornets, with their anxious little faces peering out from under them, at his uncle on the other side of the room, and finally rested his wandering gaze upon the interrogator.

"Do you know me, dear Sammy?"

A faint smile, a nod of the head in the affirmative, and he closed his eyes with a deep groan.

They thought he was dying.

"Brandy, please, quick," whispered the Sister Superior to the Little Sister, who was back with a spoon and glass in a minute.

"Is it diluted?"

"Yes, ma'am."

Sister Matilda touched the parched lips, and forced a drop or two between the almost set teeth.

"He is most gone," she whispered to the Little Sister.

"Oh, the poor, good boy, he was so kind to me. Can we not save him?" said the latter.

"Alas! I fear it is too late."

"Let me sit down there, please Sister Matilda. He recognizes me."

"Certainly, dear. Take his hand. Feel how cold it is."

The cold clammy touch made the Little Sister shudder.

"You know me, Sammy, don't you?"

This time there came the whispered response:

"Yes.

Then after a little while.

"Are we in Heaven?"

"Why, Sammy?"

"I thought I saw the angels standing around; and I felt so good fer ter see you."

"And I'm glad to see you, but sorry you are so badly hurt."

"We uns has had a bad time, but we uns has got here at last," and the Little Sister felt the grasp of his cold hand tighten on her own. Then he coughed and seemed to be strangling, his breathing being all the time short and difficult. It was a long time before he again showed signs of knowing anything.

"Had we better remove him?" asked the Little Sister of Sister Matilda.

"No, my child. But Captain Evans ought to be taken care of. He is looking very pale."

But the old man would not stir.

They gave the boy more brandy, and again he seemed to revive.

The Little Sister was standing by him. He motioned her to sit down by his side. She did so.

He fumbled about for her hand. He whispered, "Tell uncle,"

The old man was called.

"We uns has found her, uncle. She ar sittin' right here by my side. We'll go now, uncle. The cunner are most here. It'll soon be high water, and we'll cross the bay and see mother. Git in the cunner, sweet little un, git in, uncle; shove her off—shove her off—good-bye—" and with one of his hands in the broad palm of the old man, and the other in that of the girl, the boy passed over the bay.

That day Norfolk reaped the first fruits of her darling cause. Happily for her, she saw but little of that rich harvest the South gathered in during the next three years which followed. That day hyacinths and crocuses were blooming in the grounds of St. Vincent de Paul. The pouting strawberry would soon be blushing in the fields (they are so plentiful there) but by that time the fate of the city will be sealed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PLAN AT WORK.

"PUT him whar I kin find him and take him back to his angel mother when the war is over," were the only instructions which the old man had to give in regard to the burial of poor Sammy.

And so they placed him in a vault, in the little Catholic cemetery outside of the city, near the entrenched camp, as you go northward on the old Sewall's Point road; and the old man sat himself down there to watch the tomb and wait.

As for Claude Walsingham, the other patient, though at first only suffering from drunkenness, and whose incarceration in the hospital might at the beginning have been regarded in the light of a huge joke, he came very near following the boy; for he was no sooner beginning to recover from the stupor of inebriety than he was seized with a violent attack of typhoid fever, which laid him at death's door for days and weeks.

In the meantime, all Norfolk was in high jinks over the capture of a negro spy, who was returning from Fortress Monroe with letters to certain persons or a certain person, involving the said persons or person in the crime of treason.

Miss Buttercup, for one, had been arrested, and Captain

Claude Walsingham was wanted as an accomplice. The friends of Claude were struck dumb with dismay. We say friends, we should have said acquaintances, for most of those who once bore the former relation had long since repudiated him. Still they felt sorry for his downfall, and were affected by his disgrace in so far as their association with him had been intimate or distant.

While the particulars were suppressed, as a matter of course, the news of Claude's downfall spread like a wild-fire in a prairie, and not only was his name associated with some great unmentioned crime, from one end of the Confederacy to the other, but paragraphs from Northern journals were copied from paper to paper, until there was no place from Canada to the Gulf, or from the Atlantic to the Pacific, where newspapers were read, in which his name was not a synonym for treason.

On the Eastern Shore, where lived many of his relatives and companions of his youth, people who had high hopes of his future attainments in the field as well as the councils of his State and country, the blow fell heaviest of all.

They had heard of his escapades with Miss Buttercup, of his intemperance, and all the other unpleasant rumors about him, and while these things gave free scope to gossip, people who knew that Claude was a jolly good fellow, generous, pleasure loving, and all such as that, said: "He's only having a little fun. He'll come out all right. You just wait until he gets into active service; you will see that he will give a good account of himself."

But when this last report came over, that he was a traitor, and that his neck would soon be inside a halter, or a half dozen bullets through his heart, shot there by his own people, they ceased to extenuate, and set him down as one who had disappointed all their hopes, betrayed the trust his friends had reposed in him, and richly deserved the most condign punishment that could be inflicted.

Colonel Burton, perhaps his greatest enemy, though an honorable one, himself was hurt, and refused to think or talk about the matter with any one, only saying that he was sorry to hear it and hoped there was some mistake; and ventured to say that it would yet appear that Captain Claude Walsingham had been imposed upon.

Meanwhile, his whereabouts, unknown to all, save the inmates of St. Vincent de Paul, and his real name only to two of the sisters, Claude was writhing in the agonies of fever, delirious, raving, careering, as it were, on the very ragged

edge of an abyss so deep and dark, that to have fallen over into it would have forever put him beyond the reach of his maligners, or the care of his friends.

It was well that Claude was drunk when he was taken to St. Vincent's; and that his cognomen was unknown. The servant, John, knew him as a captain in the army, and the two nuns were not ignorant of his full name, but, for fear it might interfere with the working of their plans, they had thought best not to reveal it.

Claude was so much intoxicated that he could not remember his own name, and his relapse into the delirium of typhoid fever was so sudden, that it had been impossible for the Sister Superior, or the doctor, to obtain his history. His entry was:

"A Confederate Captain," (name unknown), entered February, — 1862; age about 30; complexion light; condition, stupor, caused by alcoholic indulgence, or some unknown and undeveloped disease; assigned to third floor, room 26."

So far he was safe. The city was scoured by the military authorities to find him, but in vain.

They at last made up their minds that he had escaped to the Federals, and was safely ensconced at Fortress Monroe.

All this time Claude was a sick man. To nurse him, Sister Irene was appointed, assisted by the novice. The latter was allowed to dress in the insignia of the order. In doing this, she was allowed to retain her wealth of brown hair, which she dexterously tucked under her cornet. The change of dress, while it served as a complete disguise, did not mar her striking beauty. Her dark eyes were darker still, her rich complexion more delicately fair, her placid countenance more interesting than before, and the lithe outlines of her perfect little form appeared to good advantage, though draped in the plain, full robe of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul.

"You are the prettiest little nun I ever did see," said Sister Irene, as she ran to her and kissed her over and over, the day she first arrayed herself in her new costume. "I know of but one drawback to your success in your new vocation," she continued.

"And pray what is that?"

"You are too attractive."

"You wrong me, my dear Sister Irene. I should despise my very self if I thought for a moment there was anything in my face or form which invited a worldly feeling. I know my heart is pure."

"Forgive me, my dearest little one. You misunderstand me. I did not mean that there was anything sensuous in your appearance. On the contrary, you are angelic. But the world is charmed as much by such beauty, and even more so, than by that which savors of the impure."

"Tut, tut, Sister Irene; you are too complimentary. Now you just say your prayers and jump into your bed and get a good nap, while I go and see how our poor prisoner is fighting his battle with the old man with his sickle. The doctor thinks he's getting the better of it, and will pull through if he holds out a few days longer."

"And I think he ought to be pretty well cured of his moral, as well as his mental aberrations by the time he gets through with this spell," suggested Sister Irene.

"But what shall we do when he gets well? They'll arrest him immediately if he appears in the street; and we all know he is not guilty."

"Your faith in the captain's vindication and restitution is strong, my little friend. I trust your prophetic acumen will prove correct, and everything come out as gratifying as the *denouement* of an ordinary love novel, but I must confess I am somewhat in doubt as to the final result. His captainship's luck seems to be sadly at fault. He no sooner gets out of one trouble, than in spite of himself and all his friends can do to help him, he gets into another."

"Maybe he is coming to the end of his trials, Sister Irene."

"Yes, if his trials do not bring him to his end, my dear little friend."

"Which may the Holy Virgin forfend. Good night, Sister Irene, and pleasant dreams."

"Alas! my pleasant dreams are all in the past. I hope you will find the captain very much better. Good-bye."

Back in the south-east corner of the third floor of the building was situated the room where Claude lay.

Down one flight of steps, and through a long corridor, the Little Sister tripped with light footsteps. She had every reason to believe her patient was convalescent, and this made her heart as light as her footstep. There was a bright smile irradiating all over her face, and when she entered Claude's chamber, it was as if a ray of sunshine had suddenly burst into the room, although the sick man was not in a condition to fully realize it. The apartment was scrupulously clean, and unobstructed with useless furniture. A table, on which were some phials and pill-boxes, ice-water and tumblers, milk

pitcher, spoons, lemons, sugar and brandy; two easy chairs and the couch on which the invalid had already tossed for over twenty days, were all the appointments.

With the exception of a slight odor peculiar to the disease, there was nothing in the room to indicate that a human being had there been alternating between life and death for so many days save the emaciated face of the sick one, and the thinning out of his once profuse auburn locks. For fourteen days Claude had been out of his head, knowing nothing. During that time he had talked of everything he ever knew, and a great deal of what, when in health, he had forgotten. But the most singular thing of all was that he entirely lost all recollection of recent events, and it was with the utmost difficulty he could be led back only a few weeks to the most ordinary events in his recent career.

This was a fortunate circumstance for the work which the two nuns had in view. If he had only forgotten Miss Buttercup and whisky, they might hope to reclaim him.

As the Little Sister glided into the room, he looked at her with a sort of stare, and asked:

"Who are you?"

"Your nurse. Don't you remember me?" she answered, in a cheerful voice.

"Who?" he repeated in a loud voice.

"Your nurse," rejoined the Little Sister, going up near the bedside and raising her voice to a high pitch.

"Oh, yes. I'm deaf. Where's the other one?"

"Sister Irene?"

"Sister somebody. I don't know her name."

"Well, she's out. Do you want her?"

"No, I was only trying to keep the run of you all. Have I ever seen you before?"

"I think so," replied the Little Sister, smiling. "Look at me and see if you can't call me to mind."

"Yes, I think I do. You look kind of natural. Will you please give me some milk?"

"Certainly."

Claude drank and turned over. He dozed half an hour, and after lying quietly for several minutes, said:

"Where am I, and how long have I been sick?"

"You have been here over three weeks, and this is St. Vincent's Hospital."

"Where did I come from and what am I doing sick here?"

"You were taken sick and brought here."

"From the Eastern Shore?"

"No, you've been living in Norfolk for some time."

"Is your name Kate Moore?"

"No. Who is she?"

"Oh, sure enough. What am I talking about. I once knew a young lady by that name. I was engaged to be married to her. But she is taller than you."

"Did you think a great deal of her?"

"Well, I suppose so; though there was another little girl I think I could have loved better, but her family didn't suit me."

"Who was she, Captain?"

"Her name was Mary—Mary Burton. She saved my life once; and her big brother was going to punish me pretty severely, but she took my part."

"What was that for?"

"Oh, I'm ashamed to speak of it now; its all past and gone. But come, sit down here, and tell me how I came to be in Norfolk, and in this place. I feel better if I can be near enough to you to touch your hand. It electrifies me."

"Of course, you cannot expect me to know much about you, before you came here. Although you have told us a great deal about your past life since you have been sick."

"Talking out of my head?"

"Yes. You know you came here from your home as an officer in the army."

"Oh, yes. The North and the South are at war. Yes, I remember. But what have I been doing all this time in Norfolk?"

"Living rather a fast life, Captain."

"Me, living a fast life!"

"Yes, sir."

"Am I Claude Walsingham?"

"I suppose so."

"What do you mean by a fast life?"

"Well now, you must not put me in a categorical position, Captain. Overhaul your memory a little, and see if you cannot recall some moral lapses of quite recent date."

"I remember enlisting in the army, of having to retreat from the Eastern Shore, since which time, everything seems vague and dream-like. But my head aches, now, and if you will please hand me a glass of milk, I will try and sleep a little. Perhaps, when I am better I shall be able to connect things with more certitude. You are a nice little Sister, and I already like you very much. Won't you stay with me a great deal?"

The Little Sister assured him that he should want for nothing that was in her power to bestow, and smoothing his pillow, she left him alone with a bewildered brain and the wild dreams of a yet enfeebled intellect, well pleased, so far, with the success of her darling scheme.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE VISION.

WHEN the Little Sister again peeped into Claude's room, he was wide awake and seeing her enter, beckoned her to his bedside.

"Have you slept?" she inquired, taking his hand as usual.

"Yes; and oh! such a dream as I have had."

"A good or bad one?"

"All sorts. Let me tell it to you."

"Hadn't you better rest?"

"No, I feel much better now, and this plaguey dream bothers me so I must get rid of it."

"Well, then, if it will relieve you to relate it, and you think it will not excite you too much, go ahead."

"You know I was trying to recall some matters when you were here before, and with my mind puzzled about it I dropped off into a little nap, during which I had a most fantastic vision.

"I thought I was home on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and somehow or other a war broke out between the Abolitionists, that is the Northern Methodist people, you know." The Little Sister nodded her head in affirmation, and Claude continued—"and the better class of people who are sometimes styled Bourbons, you know, or aristocrats. And I of course, siding with the latter, had to go away some where to fight them. I felt very well and strong, and all my heart seemed to be in the cause, for I despised those low-born emancipators, and longed to exterminate them. If I don't speak loud enough let me know; and if I get weary and give out, wait for me, because I want to tell you all of it. If you hold my hand I think I shall not get tired. Well, when I arrived at the place where I was to meet the enemy, I found them gone,

somewhere I knew not. At all events I couldn't find them. Now, while I was there waiting for something, I do not know what, living a sort of gay and voluptuous life, such as seems to naturally belong to an inactive military campaign, I met a very lovely woman, most perfect in form, most beautiful in features. I remember as plainly as if I saw it now, her hand and arm which were so shapely, the latter very much like your—no doubt it was yours which suggested the idea—be that as it may, I must confess I was perfectly enraptured with this person. She was larger than you; and her attire was something superb. The impression which still remains upon my brain tells me she was a sort of Arabian Nights' fairy—"

"A very pleasant being to contemplate, Captain," interrupted the Little Sister, as much to give the feeble narrator time to breathe, as anything.

"Yes, as pretty as a picture. But let me go on. Well, now, this siren was so fascinating, and managed to get such a hold on me that I forgot to go back home, giving myself up to her, heart and soul."

"Which many a warrior has done before you," again put in the Little Sister.

"Yes, Sister, and to their sorrow, as it proved to me in my vision."

"Indeed."

"Of a truth. Now, when I think of how I behaved, I am disgusted with myself; for this woman proved to be a demon in disguise."

"Strange," ejaculated the Little Sister.

"Not stranger than true, my sweet nurse, and although I tried my hardest to break the spell, I could not get away from her. It seemed to me I was bound to her by ten thousand cords of steel. I could neither leave her or resist her blandishments. Then, somehow or other I got all tangled up in my dream, almost losing my identity. She seemed to put me finally into a sort of mesmerized state, from which I awoke to find myself, not in the presence of resplendent beauty, but confronted by a living skeleton. I shudder now, when I think of how she appeared to me. Instead of the classic hands once so round and plump, of which I have spoken, I saw only the bare phalanges, nude of flesh and filthy. Her once lovely eyes were sunken far back in their hollow sockets, and had a glassy and dead expression. Her rich dark hair no longer adorned her bare white skull. Her once beautiful nose was no longer there, only the wide nos-

trils, like black caverns, her teeth, denuded of their gums, grinned in my face so ghastly, my very blood curdled in my veins. There was now no dimpled chin, but a lower jaw short and protruding, like that of a gorilla. Even while I gazed at her, filled with disgust and dread, her rich robes of silk and satin dropped from a form which artists delighted to copy, and left to naked view the outlines of a hideous cadaver. I was chained to the spot unable to move. I was frightened, and tried to call you, but could not articulate a single word.

"Presently, this awful spectre caught my hand in her fleshless grasp and drew me away, her bones rattling and her joints creaking as she went through the gasless streets of a deserted city, out into barren fields, through deep dark forests, to a black and torpid stream, which seemed to be flowing rapidly down through dark and fetid regions of swamp, its banks reeking with slimy serpents, and gaunt and hungry looking crocodiles.

"There we came to a boat, a sort of canoe, and into this she stepped, drawing me after her, and seizing an oar she steered the low black craft out into the stream, down the river we sailed.

"My grim pilot stood up behind me in the boat, and laughed in derision at my helpless condition, a hollow mocking laugh. It was not long before the river widened, the marshes were left behind, and we were passing through a splendid country; whose sloping plains and extended vistas seemed to stretch into the very confines of Paradise. Along the margin of the swiftly flying stream lay lawns of emerald verdure, where happy children played, and men and women basked in the shady groves, or strolled through avenues of lofty Lombardies, whose cool, green tops seemed to be in close communion with the azure of the summer sky. I longed to leap into the water and swim away to the pleasant shore, but I could not. Alas, I was a prisoner and bound to the dismal regions of darkness, as fast as the rapid current could sweep us on; while all around me on either side was life and health and happiness. By and by, the river grew more rapid, the banks less inviting, the sun began to slope toward the West, and away ahead I heard the roar of an awful cataract, toward which the eddying stream seemed to be gliding with the velocity of time itself. I looked, and beyond the rapids I saw a wide and shoreless ocean, dark with clouds lashed by tempests, and roaring with a fury which could be detected even above that made by the rush of water at the falls,

I gave up in despair, and must have suffered in my sleep, for my bed is even now damp from perspiration. It makes my very flesh creep when I think how dismayed I felt.

All this time I had not thought to pray. You know I always despised religion."

"Is that possible?"

"Indeed it is only too true. Like Paul, I persecuted the Christians, and now it began to come to my mind that perhaps this was a punishment sent upon me for my evil deeds. I could do nothing else, so I tried to pray. But I could not utter a word. My tongue was paralyzed. But in my heart I prayed, with closed lips and upturned eyes. I promised God every thing if he would save me, and all the while we drifted on.

I know not how long I prayed; but as I still implored, I caught the sound of singing afar off, and soon above my head the whirr of wings, and then the sight of a great company of angelic beings, who seemed to be passing over the river from one side to the other, but far up in the heavens. As they approached the middle of the stream, where we drifted, they stooped in their course, and regarded me and my strange captor with a moment's interest, and then sailed away on their aerial journey. Thousands passed me thus, the faces of some of whom I recognized, especially one whom I left on the shore weeping, when, full of ambition, I started on my unrighteous errand; but she, like the rest, gave a glance of commiseration and passed on, singing as she went.

At last I caught sight of one sweet face, like yours, it was; and now my time was growing short, the fearful roar of the midnight ocean bellowing loudly, and the fretted water whirling and surging about the frail bark. I thought she would pass me too, and all hope was gone; when halting in her course, she gazed upon me intently, then circling round and round above my head until I felt the fanning of her golden wings, she reached forth her tapering finger and touched the head of the frightful monster behind me. I heard a crash as of dry bones falling in the bottom of the boat, and saw the hateful demon lying there in a heap, and alighting where the grim pilot had stood, the angel took the helm.

I now had turned round, and there stood one whose face I knew a long time ago. It was she who twice before had stood between me and peril, risking all that I might escape pain and death. She held out her hand—so much like this, I could almost make oath it were the same—and touched my lips. In a moment I was changed. I felt myself rising in mid-air, and ascending, wing-and-wing, with my angelic

rescuer. Far below me, I saw the boat tossed wildly by the mad billows, plunging headlong over the rapids and disappearing in the seething abyss. And then we rose to greater heights, until, no longer chilled by the dread of death, in the genial rays of the declining sun we soared away to regions of unutterable bliss, and I awoke.

And while I lay, my heart yet panting with the excitement of my unaccountable dream, and waiting for you to come in, I promised God, if he would raise me from this bed of sickness, I would change my life and be a better man, and if I could ever find an opportunity, I would by some sacrifice make atonement to her who I now acknowledge as the best friend I ever had, even my guardian angel, sweet Mary Burton."

The tears were glistening in his eyes, the perspiration standing on his pale brow, while the Little Sister, with her face turned away, was weeping silently. Her prayers had been answered, her work almost accomplished; so ready are the good angels and willing to help us, even though we only resolve to do a gracious act.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE REVELATION AND RESOLVE.

Six days after the incident related in the last chapter, and the 9th of March was at hand.

The day before had been one of unusual excitement at Norfolk. The greatest effort of mechanical skill and inventive genius yet put forth by the Confederates, and perhaps by mankind in the art of naval warfare, had that day been consummated, and had culminated in a result as signal as it was astonishing. So much so, that the most sanguine adherent of the Union cause began to look with serious forebodings upon the ultimate success of the country's struggle, and the restoration of the Federal Government.

The "Merrimac," an old hulk left burned to the water's edge and sunk by the United States authorities when they evacuated the Gosport navy yard, had been raised, reconstructed, built upon with layers of wood and iron, launched and equipped, and had steamed down the Elizabeth River to

Hampton Roads, sunk two of the finest ships of the Federal Navy, and inflicted a loss upon her adversaries of two hundred and fifty men; with only two of her crew killed and eight wounded, and that by an explosion of one of her own guns.

With colors flying, and amid the salvos of Confederate artillery and the wild acclamations of thousands of rejoicing people, she had sailed back, at the close of that eventful day, in all her glory, the pride of the Confederacy and the wonder of the world.

All Secessia stood on tiptoe, and all the Union trembled. There was no eye to pity, no arm to save. Claude Walsingham, who was getting better rapidly, so rapidly that he was sitting up, heard the guns, and inquired the cause.

"They are fighting down the river," replied Sister Irene, who was relieving the Little Sister that day.

"Fighting," repeated Claude, vaguely.

"Yes; the "Virginia" went down the harbor, this morning."

"What "Virginia"?

"The iron-clad; don't you understand?"

"Oh, yes; I do remember, now." Claude put his hand to his brow, as if to collect his thoughts. "It seems like a dream; I have been sick so long, and dreamed so much, I can scarcely discern between the visionary and the real. Will you not sit down and tell me all about it, just as it is? and when I have got it all straight in my head, it will all come back to me, I think."

"Well, now, to begin. The country is at war."

"Yes, I realize that."

"And you, yourself, are a Confederate officer."

"Go on."

"Your recent illness has been so severe, that it has caused a suspension of memory. As I go and relate to you the facts connected with your recent past, you will, no doubt, be able to grasp them. You came over to Norfolk, when your part of the country was invaded by the enemy. While here, you were taken sick, and brought to the hospital."

"The other Sister has told me that; but there is an interim, and it is that interim which hangs upon me like a nightmare. I have puzzled my brain a thousand times to unravel it. Tell me all about it. No matter how unpleasant it is, I can bear it."

"I must inform you, Captain, at the beginning, it is not *the most pleasing* part of your life to recall; but as you de-

sire me to speak of it, and the time seems to have arrived for me to do so, I will gratify you. It may do you an unaccountable amount of good." Sister Irene spoke slowly, and very impressively.

"After arriving in Norfolk, you were carried away by enthusiasm, and the gayeties of the city, and became intemperate. Young and impressionable, you made the acquaintance of a very bad woman. With her influence, you sank rapidly to disgrace."

"Do you refer to me?"

"Yes, to you, Claude Walsingham. You will allow me to tell you of your faults, because you know I am your friend. That woman I refer to, led you astray. You fell from your high position in society. The woman in the case was arrested for treason, and you were by some means implicated."

"Great God! is this so, or a horrid dream?

"This is all so. The charge, I think, is that of communicating important information to the Commandant of Fortress Monroe, in regard to the defenses of Norfolk. Had you not been sick, and under this roof, you would now be languishing in prison, or, perhaps, shot long ago."

Claude was so pale, that Sister Irene was afraid she was premature. He pressed his hand to his brow again, and said:

"I begin to realize it all, but yet indifferently. Oh, that horrid woman! But go on, Sister Irene; let it all come now, even if it kills me."

"No one knows of your whereabouts but the Little Sister, and myself. We have not only nursed you in your sickness, but protected you and shielded you from arrest."

"How shall I ever repay you, dear ladies? I tell you, so help me Heaven, as I expect to die and be judged at the last day, I am not guilty."

"So we believe."

"But how am I to repair all this injury to my name and family? What shall I do?"

"To answer you in detail would require a sermon. Let me in a general and concise manner tell you what you must do. The Little Sister and I have undertaken to see you through, and if you will be guided by us, you may yet be saved."

"How could I refuse such guidance?"

"First, you must remain here until you are strong. Then you must get out of the city, make your way to Richmond

and enlisting in the army as a private soldier, redeem yourself from the opprobrium of the false charges made against you. They are fighting on the peninsula, and you can find a place in which to serve your country from which you can rise to eminence or die at the post of duty. Blood wipes out sins. Once more on your feet, you can face the crime now charged against you, and defend yourself. Secondly, you must be temperate, ay, in your case, abstemious. Thirdly, you must not be carried away by the charms of the softer sex, especially when they are found in persons of unsavory reputation. Fourthly, you must fulfil all the vows you have made, if in so doing you do not violate a good conscience. If you will do these things trusting in God for help, and you are really innocent, it will all be well with you again.

"Sister Irene, I thank you for this revelation, and I swear that henceforth I will live a virtuous and an honorable life. As my past conduct comes back to me I see all my folly; and my sins are ever before me."

"Keep yourself in that frame of mind, my dear Captain, and your restitution is an assured fact; nothing but the most circumspect life will now save you from the lowest depths of ignominy."

"With your help, the Little Sister's and God's, I will so live, and show to the world that although a sinner, I am not a traitor, and although I have been immoral I am not lost."

While all these things were transpiring in and around Norfolk, the great heart of the North was throbbing with patriotic emotion; and her sons in every section thirsting not for revenge or blood, but for the salvation of that Union under which their fathers had lived so happily and achieved so much. Every device and every scheme which an inventive Yankee could discover, with which to match the genius of the finished Southern, was brought into requisition. But among them all there was one man living in New York whose name will go down to posterity along with the few undying ones that figured in the history of the times, and that was John Ericsson. For months he had quietly been engaged in building an odd looking sort of a boat, at which every body who saw it laughed or sneered.

"It will sink to the bottom," said one. "It will never leave the harbor," said another. "Its a stupendous failure, if anything so insignificant can be called stupendous," said a third. But old John worked on, and when it was finished he called it the "Monitor."

A few days after the first of March the vessel, derisively

called, the "Cheese Box," from the shape of its turret, sailed away for Fortress Monroe.

On the night of the 8th as the victorious "Merrimac" steamed gayly up the river to rest on her laurels for the day, the "Monitor," hardly visible above the waves, crept slowly by the batteries and redoubts of the old fort and anchored in the roads, behind the disabled "Minnesota." Little hope did this strange craft infuse into the hearts of those who that day had seen the huge leviathan of the seas come down from Norfolk, careering on her mission of blood and destruction, as unaffected by the heaviest shot and shell as the roof of a house by the rain of ordinary hailstones, and that was only waiting for the morrow to come back, finish her work of destruction in the roads, and then lay tribute to or destroy every seaboard city of the North.

The day came and so did the "Merrimac," steering straight for the "Minnesota." Thousands of eyes were upon her. Thousands of hearts were quaking with fear. Would the little, low oddity sent down there by John Ericsson dare to meet her?

All the shore was lined with anxious spectators. The walls of the fortress, the rigging of the ships, the buildings of Hampton (those that remained), were black with human beings.

A shout that made the welkin ring went up when, gliding out from behind the stranded battle ship, the thing they had called the "Cheese Box" was seen to go forth with its single gun to meet the Goliath of the South, and the fight began.

The great historic harbor which had seen the weary pioneers of civilization come sailing through its ample gateway long years before; the welcome transports bringing provisions and sympathy from their distant home across the seas; the hostile fleets of Britain, and the timely argosies of DeGrasse and Rochambeau in the days of the great Revolution; and the late events of the war of 1812, was this day to witness a naval contest which in its awful splendor should put to blush the daring deeds of Paul Jones, and sink into comparative nothingness the world-renowned achievements of the gallant Nelson.

Finding nothing to shoot at, the commander of the "Merrimac" assayed to run down his insignificant adversary; but the alertness of the "Monitor" and the clumsiness of the former prevented the consummation of that object, and convinced the Confederate that he had crossed swords with a foe that was worthy of his steel.

From early in the morning until the afternoon began to wane, did those Titans grapple in deadly conflict, sometimes crashing together, at others broadside to broadside with cannon-mouths almost touching, pouring forth the deafening thunder of their artillery, veiled in sulphureous flame, and reeling like drunken men under the terrific force of the blows received from the heavy ordnance they carried.

And so they fought on until the pride of the Confederacy balked, battered, and disabled, backed out of the fight and steamed away to her anchorage, leaving the roads in possession of the little "Moniter" the fleet at the Fortress unmolested, and the country once more hopeful.

All that day Claude sat in his room and listened to the jar of the great guns; but they awoke no enthusiasm in his breast. Sickness, regret, and a sense of lost pride and injured honor made every thing appear to him in a distorted and sickly light, and in his weak condition Ambition found no fuel to feed on, and Hope no resting-place for the sole of her feet.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ARREST AND TRIAL.

THE defeat of the "Merrimac" brought dismay upon the people of Norfolk. It was to this part of the country a Waterloo. They had predicated a large amount of hope on their pet scheme which now gave way to chagrin.

Naturally they laid the coincidence of the "Monitor's" inopportune appearance, on the day after the sailing of the "Merrimac," to the work of traitors, and the spirit of revenge was aroused afresh against Miss Buttercup and her accomplice.

To make matters still worse for Claude, this execrable woman, under promise of condonement, had accused him of being *particeps criminis* with herself, and under pretence of turning State's evidence, and incriminating him, had made a false confession which set the whole town at his heels like a pack of hungry wolves.

Negro slaves were not more impeccable than their white masters, and being by nature watchful and communicative, were valuable as spies, and treacherous as friends.

When it was thoroughly known that it was Captain Claude Walsingham who was wanted, it did not require more than ten dollars in Confederate money to discover his hiding place. Nor could any vigilance on the part of his two female friends at the hospital prevent it.

On the very morning succeeding that on which was fought the great battle of the iron-clads, an orderly accompanied by four soldiers with muskets, waited on the Sister Superior of St. Vincent's, and asked the privilege of searching the premises.

"It is a downright outrage, and I protest against such a desecration," replied Sister Matilda. "If you have no respect for the institution and the Sisters, I should think you would for the sick," she continued.

"War, madam, has no respect for the sick, nor for institutions. I am sent here to search among your patients for Claude Walsingham, and if we find him and he is able to go with me, to take him; or if he is too ill to be removed, to leave a guard at his room door.

"Claude Walsingham?" repeated the Sister Superior, "I know of no one here by that name. We have no such person."

"We shall be better satisfied after we have looked through the building," replied the orderly, determined not to be put off.

"Then you'll have to proceed, as you are determined to do so, whether with or without my consent."

"We are sorry, madam, to have to displease you, but we know our duty, and however unpleasant the job, we have no choice but to obey orders. Will you guide us through, or shall we go our own way?"

One of the sisters was called to show them through the building.

They had not proceeded far when the Little Sister became cognizant of their presence in the hospital. She ran to the Sister Superior in breathless agitation:

"Who are they looking for, Sister Matilda?"

"Your patient, I presume, as he is the only soldier in the hospital, at this time." She flew to Sister Irene.

"What shall we do. There are soldiers in the house, and they are looking for Claude. How can we manage to keep them away from his room?"

"That is impossible now. They will take no excuse. We shall have to allow things to take their natural course."

"But he is not guilty, and must not suffer. Besides he is not strong enough yet to be removed."

"I fear there is no way to prevent his removal. The only thing we can do is to look after him wherever they take him, and defend him as best we can. They are already going to his room, I hear their footsteps in that direction."

"But they may shoot him, before we can do any thing," pleaded the Little Sister beginning to cry.

"Perhaps not at once, certainly not without a trial."

"And that awful woman will lie about him, and he will be ruined," and the Little Sister wrung her white hands in an agony of perplexity, and helplessness.

"Have faith in God, my little friend. Be assured that justice will prevail," said Sister Irene soothingly, putting her arms about the other's neck.

"I have had faith in God, Sister Irene, from my earliest childhood, and it has led me through martyrdoms, innumerable. Alas! I am almost without hope. Come, let us hurry down, and see what they are doing with him."

As they descended toward the lower hall, they heard heavy footsteps coming down the corridor of the third floor, and hurrying forward they reached the lower floor ahead of the soldiers, whom they saw following them, with Claude between two of their number heavily ironed about the wrists.

At the foot of the stairs the two sisters stepped aside to give room for them to pass. As Claude caught sight of his two faithful nurses, his face beamed with a bright and benign smile of recognition. The Little Sister as usual began to weep, but her tears did not blind her. She saw the hard manacles already cutting into his tender flesh. Her sympathetic heart was touched by the sight. She sprang forward in front of the orderly, as he stood at the foot of the stairs.

"Will you please take off the hand-cuffs? See, they press him too tightly, and cut his wrist. Surely there is no need to manacle him. He is very weak, and cannot run away."

"But, Miss——"

"Do you imagine for a moment, he can escape from five strong men. Look! how pale and trembling he is—

"I will not permit any dictation in this matter. Please stand aside."

"You are an unfeeling wretch, and I will not stir until you release him."

"Then, I shall have to remove you," said the sergeant, roughly.

"You are not a Confederate soldier, to dare to put your hand upon a Sister of Charity. I do not wish to interfere with your duty; I only plead in the interest of humanity.

If you will take off those heavy irons, I will go all the way with you, and be myself responsible for his safe deliverance, if you have any fear that he will escape."

"Stand aside, woman, I say," and as the Sergeant spoke he put up his hand and pushed the girl aside, rudely, dislodging her cornet.

"For shame!" cried the nuns, as the Little Sister staggered backward, Losing the covering for her head, her great volume of hair rolled down upon her shoulders, almost enveloping her in its ample flood.

Claude, burning with indignation, would have struck down the brutal offender if he could, but he was powerless. As they ledh im by he cast a long parting glance at the distressed girl, and as if struck with some sudden vision, he cried out in a loud voice:

"Hold! I would speak with her! A moment, I say!" But they hurried him on, he looking over his shoulder with an indescribable expression on his face, of surprise and emotion. At the provost-marshal's office he was asked his name, age, and place of birth, and whether he had anything to say; or if he knew Miss Buttercup, or anything in relation to the crime charged against him, which they told him was treason.

He told them he was not guilty. That he thought he had known Miss Buttercup, but could connect nothing concerning her, and the crime with himself in his association with her, which yet seemed like the remembrance of some unpleasant dream.

From thence he was taken to the city jail, and placed in a cell. In pity for his delicate appearance, they gave him a bed of straw, placed on the floor, and a diet better in quality than was furnished the other prisoners.

In a sort of half insane condition he submitted without a murmur to his fate, sleeping much and gradually gaining strength. In this way he spent the first ten days of his incarceration previous to his trial, which was now at hand.

A special general court-martial was called to sit upon his case, and was composed of three colonels and four captains, with the lieutenant-general as Judge-Advocate.

The session was held in a room of the custom-house in the lower part of the town. The court was an intelligent body of military gentlemen taken from Alabama, Georgia, and Virginia regiments. Claude was allowed counsel, but elected to proceed to trial without any.

He appeared before the court very much improved in health.

His beard had long been neglected, and was long and auburn in color; and although he looked much older and sadder than before his illness, he was still a handsome man, and with the effects of strong drink thoroughly eradicated from his system, looked every inch a gentleman.

His memory having returned to almost its normal condition, he related as succinctly as possible the history of his life from the time of his leaving the Eastern Shore, to the day of his entrance into the hospital, without referring to events which transpired during fits of intoxication, of which he knew nothing; disclaiming all knowledge of being in any respect or manner concerned in any act or conspiracy which might be construed as implicating him in any treasonable intent whether of thought, word or deed.

His manner was calm, dignified and truthful, and made a deep impression on his hearers. After which the trial began.

The only witnesses were Miss Buttercup and the intercepted negro.

A letter was also produced in evidence which was found in possession of the latter when arrested, directed to Miss Buttercup, and signed by an anonymous writer, dated from Fortress Monroe, in the month of February last, and acknowledging the receipt of another, sent from Norfolk about the same time.

The negro after being instructed as to the nature of an oath, and the penalty of its violation, testified that he at the instigation of the lady, took a letter to General Wool, at Fortress Monroe, the contents of which he did not know, and was on his way back when intercepted with the note in reply, which had been produced in court. That the prisoner was present when Miss Buttercup's missive was handed him, and must have been aware of its destination. The latter was not evidence but a clear and indubitable inference.

Miss Buttercup was next put upon the witness stand. She appeared with all the indifference of a disinterested person, and testified with as much *sang froid* as if she had never seen the prisoner before, or ever been in the least manner upon terms of any intimacy with him whatever.

"Do you recognize the prisoner at the bar?" asked the Judge-Advocate; after she had been interrogated as to her name, residence, age, etc.

"I do."

"How long have you known him?"

"About four months."

"How were you first brought into contact with him?"

"He first came with other gentlemen to my soirée at my house, sir."

"Was he a frequent visitor to your house?"

"After his first visit he came frequently."

"What were your relations with him?"

The witness hesitated.

"You are at liberty to answer the question or not, as you like."

"Well, sir, I should say very friendly."

"Will you please state to the court what happened at your house on or about the 8th of February last?"

"Captain Walsingham was at my house on or about that day, and I requested him to obtain some information for me."

"What was that information?"

"I wanted to know when the "Virginia" would be ready to sail."

"Did he serve you in that respect?"

"He did. He saw the authorities—that is—he said so—and he came back and told me she would be ready by the 8th of March."

"Did he know for what purpose you desired the information?"

"Yes, sir."

"How do you know that?"

"He asked me why I wished to know when the "Virginia" would be finished."

"What was your reply?"

"That I had lost faith in the Confederacy, anyhow, and I wished to communicate with the Federals at Fortress Monroe."

"What caused you to lose faith in the cause of the Confederacy?"

"I had come to that conclusion by observation, sir."

"Are you still of that opinion?"

"I decline to answer."

"So you told Captain Walsingham that you were going to tell them at Fortress Monroe when the Virginia would go into active service?"

"I did, sir."

"Please state what the prisoner said to this."

"At first he pretended to be shocked, but afterwards said he would aid me, and that we both would be made rich when the war ended; and then we could both go to Europe."

Claude, with a face unmoved by emotion, looked straight into the eyes of the woman, who bore his searching glance with the assurance of one whose conscience was as clean as the driven snow.

"Do you know how he obtained that information?"

"I do not, sir."

"What followed after that?"

"Then he sat down and wrote a letter at my dictation."

"To whom was the letter addressed?"

"To General John E. Wool."

"Well, will you please state what was done with the letter?"

"We gave it to this colored man."

"And what did you tell him to do with it?"

"We told him to take it to Fortress Monroe."

When Miss Buttercup was asked to take her seat, the solemn countenances of the judges told but too plainly how unpleasant was the task which lay before them. Most of them had known Claude before his fall, and had hoped that no case would be made out against him. But the evidence was so positive and direct that, without some rebutting testimony, his doom was already sealed.

The Judge-Advocate asked him what he had to say by way of contradiction to the evidence which had been given.

His only reply was: "I am not guilty."

"Then you mean to say that these witnesses have lied?"

"In part, sir, they have."

"Were you not a frequent visitor at this woman's house? Were you not closeted with her every day? Were you not at her house on the very day in question?"

"I must admit I was, sir."

"What part of her testimony is false, then?"

"As God is my judge, sir, I know nothing of that letter or its contents."

"Did you not give her the information she speaks of?"

"Of that, sir, I have no recollection."

There was a dead and painful silence. Then the members of the court-martial put their heads together and conversed in a low tone of voice.

Claude saw by the pallor of their faces and their averted eyes what the verdict would be.

The Judge-Advocate told him to rise. He did so.

"Claude Walsingham, we find you guilty of the crime of treason, as set forth in the several counts and specifications of the charge filed against you, and in deference to your posi-

tion in the army and standing in society, have decreed that you be taken from this room to the city jail, and there kept in close confinement until the 10th day of May next, from which place you will be taken to some point outside of the city limits, between the hours of eight and nine in the morning, and be shot to death, and may God have mercy on your soul."

Claude heard the sentence with the same stoical indifference he had maintained throughout the trial, and submitted without a tremor to the shackles that bound his pale hands. He neither looked to the right nor left, but passed down the steps of the custom-house through a gaping crowd, with an armed soldier on either side of him, while Miss Buttercup, with a nonchalant toss of her head, tried to appear unconcerned as she swung herself out of the court-room.

CHAPTER XXX.

REMORSE.

THE old city prison of Norfolk stands on the corner of Cone Street and Court House Square. It is an ordinary building, composed of brick, with adobe walls, turteted above the eaves after the style of the middle ages, and long, narrow windows, heavily grated, but without panes of any sort —mere apertures for the transmission of light as well as ventilation.

The cells within, constantly filled with the refuse of the negro population, are filthy in the extreme, dark and noisome.

Claude's was situated on the second floor in the northwest corner, near the landing of the main stairway, and the first of a tier stretching along on the Cove Street side. It was a dismal place, with a straw bed on the floor, a ricketty table a foot square, an earthen pitcher with a broken and ragged brim, and a single Windsor chair. From this miserable place the once gay and happy young man, full of ambition and patriotism, would go forth to die. What a mercy had he gone in the delirium of fever before awaking to the awful revelation of his infamy!

For the first two or three days which passed after his sen-

tence, he neither thought nor talked, but eat and slept as mechanically as a machine, or as an animal for the slaughter.

But as his physical condition began to improve, his mental faculties became more active, and the struggle began.

All without was bright and glorious sunshine. The spring was bursting into an effulgence which inspired even the most inanimate things of nature with a new existence. The blood of poor Claude began to flow warmly through his veins, and his heart to throb in unison with the pulsations of the great world around him. But in his gloomy cell, all was damp, dark and filthy.

It was natural enough for him to ask himself the question: "What brought me here?" and dwelling for days and days on this one theme, he settled down at last to this conclusion: "I now see, I have been all wrong. I started out wrong. I am punished, not only because I have done wrong myself, individually, but because my fathers were wrong before me.

"From my very cradle I have had erroneous ideas of life. I had thought the chief end of man to be luxury in the first place, ambition in the second place, and prejudices of all kinds in the third place. That to be born of certain parentage, reared in affluence, and belong to the aristocracy, made a man better than his fellows whose beginnings were less pretentious, and whose lots were cast in humbler circumstances.

"I did not dream in the happy days gone by I should ever come to this.

"The Burtons might, I thought, and so might the Masons; but a Walsingham, never.

"Thus was I led to despise that sweet creature who bore the hated name, whose debtor I have so often been, and now must ever be.

"I now see, clearly, I never loved Kate Moore at all. If I had, I should never have yielded to that bad woman as I did—she who has been my ruin. No man who truly loves, and is conscious of it, will ever wrong the object of his affections by debasing himself; for love is the soul of honor.

"As I now realize that morality is not religion, so now I see that respect alone is not sufficient to keep a man true to his vows. Unless the heart go with the head, the tie is only a rope of sand.

"If I had only my life to go over again, how different would I act.

"If I were only free this day I would go to Kate Moore and tell her I had wronged her, that I never knew what it was

to love her as I ought, and then I would give my patrimony—now all gone to the winds; I would give all that once attached to my name—now and henceforth to be infamous; I would surrender my pride—now humbled in the dust—any thing, every thing would I give up for that one poor child, who was as devoted to me as a guardian angel; and facing a frowning world, go hand and hand with her along earth's lowliest path, a contented and happy man.

"Though finely educated, and surrounded by glittering conventionalities, I was never taught the value of truth; not that I or my father was given to lying; but I was never taught to correctly interpret truth. I simply believed what my ancestors had believed before me; and what was worse, I held in contempt all others who dared to differ with me. I grew up to believe that God made me better than he did others—out of finer clay—and that he created others for no other purpose but to serve me; when I ought to have been taught that a clean body, a pure heart, and a bright intellect made the man.

"I despised the Abolitionists, I persecuted the preachers, I hated the poor, I loved slavery. God is now calling me to an account for it all." And then he bowed his head and continued:

"But worst of all, I learned to hate my country, and to curse its flag. Many a time when a boy, traveling with my father, *en route* to this very city, by the way of Fortress Monroe, have I heard him blaspheme the stars and stripes floating over the battery, and damn the soldier guard on duty at the government wharf.

"Why, oh, why, after living under the protection of that flag so long secure in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, did I ever raise my puny arm against it?

"To whom but God and my country do I owe all the bright days of my youth; and to whom but the devil and rebellion do I owe all my present misery?"

"And what are we fighting for? To perpetuate slavery, to establish the right to dismember the Union, to set up a Cotton States oligarchy with which the State of Virginia never has had, nor can never have but one single interest of commerce or feeling, and that the brotherhood of slavery.

"Oh, height of folly! Oh, worse than treason! They may call me a renegade, a poltroon or what not. I know I am innocent of crime, but as I am about to die, my better reason, now free from all passion and prejudice, tells me I have erred, and calls upon me to repent; and so clear has

the light of truth fallen upon my once benighted mind, that I had rather be a Burton, despised and ostracised, than a Walsingham rich and respected, simply because I was an aristocrat and a Bourbon.

"But all these thoughts I might as well bury forever in the deepest recesses of my heart.

"If I confessed to such views as these, it would only add to the suspicions of my guilt. They would say: 'That proves that he is a traitor. That shows him up in his true light—a faithless renegade!'

"Oh, oh, oh, to be in this dreadful fix! Apparently false to my kind and kindred, false to my vows of courtship, false to my oath of fealty, while I know as truly as I live, that in all that made me a characteristic member of my family, in all that led me to promise to wed Kate Moore, and in all that made me a Confederate soldier, I was wrong, wrong, a thousand times wrong! Living or dying, what is my duty—the duty of an honest man—but to repent, repent, repent; and right down here will I fall upon my bended knees, and never rise until God for Jesus' sake has made me a new and better man."

All night long in his loathsome cell, while the vile drunken wretches convicted of petty crimes, caroused and raved on the floor below, did poor Claude wrestle in prayer, like Jacob of old with the angel.

No longer crowned with the curly locks of Jove, and glorying in the strength of a perfect manhood, with a haughty step and head erect, disdaining the ground he walked upon; but weak in body, broken in mind, and crushed in spirit, he crawled in the dirt and mire of his prison pen, calling upon God to pity and have mercy upon his poor soul.

Oh, that night of mortal agony! As he lay there prostrate, writhing, beating his body with his clenched fists, how his whole life came up scene by scene before him; and every time he passed upon some important epoch in his career he would reiterate:

"All wrong, all wrong!"

His bloodshot eyes, his black and soiled apparel, looking like a reaper's in the harvest-field, made so by perspiration and the filthy condition of his cell, his crouching, contorted attitude gave him the appearance of one possessed. But still he knew no peace, could find no rest for his soul. Praying did not satisfy. To appease a violated nature, or an angry God, requires restitution. Faith never yet saved a human being, who, having it in his power to make amends, failed to *do it.*

Claude Walsingham had done much harm in the world. What good to the world would be his repentance, his agony, his remorse? Its influence could not go outside his prison walls. It would not even sweeten the damp odors of the abominable cell, in which, like a demon of the tombs, he wrestled with despair and remorse. Poor Claude had nothing he could call his own.

He could not promise a future in which to put into practical living his new resolves, for his days were numbered, and would soon be at an end. He would never see either Miss Moore or Miss Burton again, to plead with them for condonement of his sins of commission, as to one, and his sins of omission, as to the other. He could never have the opportunity to offer his services to his outraged country, to repay the injury his influence had wrought. Alas! he knew not what to do. While thus oppressed, a feeling of great humility came over him. He felt more debased than a worm of the dust. He ransacked his brain for a comparison—an example for emulation.

He thought of his old slave, Jim, who used to attend him in boyhood, who kept his horse, hunted and fished with him, serving him faithfully day and night, carrying him on his back, watching over him by the camp-fire, blacking his boots and dressing him as though he were a child, and through rough usage and good usage, always the same. The old man had never in all his life uttered one complaining word, though kicked and cuffed and sometimes lashed at the whim of an irrascible master.

He thought of his setter dog—how, when vexed and out of humor, he had beaten him almost to death, the brute would crawl to his feet and lick his boots as if the pleasures of humility exceeded the pain of the blows; and he was willing to be negro or dog—anything so that God would only let him get close to him and acknowledge him as His child.

But still though somewhat more at ease, there came not the desired blessing. At last he thought, "I will write out my confession and the world shall thus know of my repentance. I will say to my outraged country, I was misled; to Kate Moore I will kneel for forgiveness upon the plea that I was mistaken in my feelings and did not love her when I thought I did; and to the memory of Mary Burton the tribute of a broken heart which, were she living and I at liberty, should be hers, though the brand of Abolitionism were stamped upon my cheek with a red-hot iron." And feeling thus his heart grew softer, his eyes moist, a calm like that which succeeds

a tempest suffused itself through all his being, and completely exhausted and overwhelmed with a sense of utter despair, he crawled to his humble couch and lying down, sobbed himself to sleep.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE COMBAT DEEPENS.

THE first of May had arrived. Glorious month of ineffable sweetness in Virginia!

But why dilate upon the beauties of the season when the black cloud of war hung like a pall over all the fair land about which we write?

Once again the plains of Yorktown drank up the blood of English-speaking people. Once more the famous cave of Cornwallis was rehabilitated, and the home of Nelson became a target for the cannoneer. Never before was there such activity at Fortress Monroe. Never has there been since General McClellan was projecting his fatal "On to Richmond," and General Wool his successful descent upon Norfolk.

With such stirring events almost in sight of him, Colonel Burton could not remain an idle spectator. He asked and received permission to advance with his regiment to the front. It was soon noised abroad that his command was about to be transferred. So considerate had he been in his administration of military affairs on the Eastern Shore—so well disciplined his troops, that all the people had become reconciled to the return of the old government, and expressed general and widespread regret at his intended departure.

Many of the best citizens of the two counties called upon him, assuring him of their good wishes, and invoking his influence in the choice of his successor.

It was the day before his departure, and everything was bustle and confusion at head-quarters.

On that day Colonel Burton received the following note:

"COLONEL THOMAS BURTON,
"Commanding Federal Forces,
"Eastern Shore of Virginia.

"Dear Sir,

"Will you please do me the favor to call before leaving

the Shore. I desire the pleasure of bidding you "good-bye."

"Respectfully yours,
"KATE MOORE."

"Desires the pleasure of bidding me good-bye, eh? A rather ambiguous expression, Miss Kate. However, I will gratify you." Snatching up a pen, he replied:

"MISS KATE MOORE,
"Dear Miss,
"Your note of this morning is to hand. If I can find time, on my way to Cape Charles, I shall be pleased to call to-morrow as I pass your gate with my regiment, which will probably be about one o'clock in the afternoon.
"Wishing you health and happiness,
"I am truly yours,
"THOMAS BURTON."

If any one had asked Kate Moore what her object was in writing this note to the man she had so often treated with the coldest indifference, she would, in all probability, have answered with even less perspicuity than she wrote.

But from the time that she heard the tap of the drum, and saw the glittering bayonets of the soldiers as they filed down the old highway, till the handsome form of the Union officer appeared, galloping up the lane toward the house, her heart had seemed to wake up from its long slumber, and the sluggish tide of life to course her veins as in the bright days of yore, ere the blight of misfortune had dried up its fountains, as she had thought, forever.

"I wanted to see you, Colonel Burton, now that you are going to leave us, to tell you how grateful I am to you for all the favors you have shown me, and all the trouble you have been put to on my account. I do this from a sense of duty I cannot well put aside. You are going to the front, I hear, and as I may never have the pleasure of seeing you again, I wanted to say good-bye."

Colonel Burton had never heard her speak in such a natural, familiar tone before. For once there was no irony or bitterness.

"You are very kind, Miss Kate, to give me this opportunity. I had determined, at our last interview, not to see you again."

"Well, I have learned, Colonel Burton, to be less consist-

ent than I used to be; at least, what I used to call consistency. I suppose you would call it prejudice. In other words, I have at last accustomed myself to put up with vicissitudes. Indeed I have become reconciled myself to what you call progress. When one can not have things one's own way, one might as well give in; so, Colonel, had you stayed away, I should begin to think you had become as set in your ways as you once thought I was."

"I am glad to hear from your own lips such an honest confession. I think, in such a frame of mind, there is yet hope for a happy future. Our wealth does not consist so much in the *things* which we possess, as in the capacity of the heart to store up true and lasting affection, and a disposition to make the best of everything. Yes, Miss Kate, I am on my way to the front. I cannot bear this inert life on the Eastern Shore, with little to hope for by way of promotion, and less to love."

"No one, Colonel, can appreciate your condition more than I. I have thought much of you since the loss of your dear sister, knowing that she was the last of your family except yourself. Will you return to the Eastern Shore after the war?"

"That is a hard question to answer. I have few friends here, and very little to bind me to the place of my birth. I may not be spared to return. Of one thing I am sure, there are none left to mourn my death should I fall."

"I think you do yourself injustice, colonel. Your management of affairs has won you many friends. I think we often change our opinion of people when we have known them better."

"Yes; I think that is the case, and if people are less prejudiced against me, I am glad of it," the colonel replied, carelessly.

From ordinary topics of conversation, they both became gradually less talkative, until the interview assumed a serious and almost painful aspect.

Suddenly, and seemingly without any special object in view, the officer inquired, with a peculiarly quizzical smile:

"Do you hear anything, now-a-days, Miss Kate, from across the water?"

"Nothing at all, Colonel, except by way of rumor. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing."

"How could I, since you have broken up the blockade business," she replied, with a smile.

"*But love*, you know, laughs at difficulties, and has wings

like a dove. Surely I could put no barrier that could balk Cupid's flight."

"Love! Alas, Colonel, like all my other earthly prospects (if it is to my case you refer), that also has turned into ashes. I am alone in the world." The sadness which accompanied the last remark was touching.

"Our cases, Miss Kate, are similar in that respect. My prosperity and your adversity, however antipodal, have culminated in the same result, namely, poverty of the heart, which to my mind, is the worst of all calamities, and you and I meet at last upon the same common ground. Will you permit me to ask you," he continued, rising and advancing to her chair, "if you now consider me your equal?"

The color in Miss Burton's face rose like a flood tide on the full of the moon.

"I consider myself beneath even the negroes in point of property and social condition. No one respects us when we are poor."

"Will you accept my friendship in good faith?"

She was silent.

"Will you not give me a categorical answer to-day?"

"Will you kindly allow me to reply at the end of the war?" she asked.

"And then to refuse to entertain my proposition if your side wins? Do you think that is fair?"

"I think you wrong me by jumping at such a conclusion. The fact is, Colonel, I'm in no condition now to accept or refuse your kind offer. This, however, I will promise you, and more I cannot. I will allow no one to rise to a higher position in my friendship than that which you hold, until I see you again," and as she said this her eye-lids drooped and she looked steadily at the carpet.

"I thank you for that much, noblest of women," replied the Colonel, fervently grasping her hand. "So let it rest until we meet again. Meanwhile, as you have suffered much on account of these troublous times, and have erstwhile held me somewhat to blame as being in an indirect manner the cause, I have had my will written, and in case I am slain, Moorefield is yours," and as he spoke he drew from his pocket a paper folded like a legal document.

"But, Colonel Burton, I cannot accept—"

"Say no more," he interrupted, "for you have not time. The left wing of my battalion has already passed the gate, and I must go."

As she rose the paper which he had laid on her lap fell to the floor.

He pressed her hand to his lips, bowed and left the room.

Kate watched him galloping off down the lawn towards the gate.

Once before in her life she had experienced similar feelings. But the first time all was despair. Then the coming events of her near future seemed to cast their shadows before; but now it appeared to her that the night was far spent, and the day was at hand. There was nothing visible to warrant such a conclusion; but her intuition looking far ahead saw the glimpses of the dawn, and from that day forth she was a new creature. She picked up the will, and saw that it was even as he had said; and that day as she went to her menial duties, the family heard her humming an old love song. Human nature is so full of elasticity when youth and health are there, to respond to the touch of hope!

Meanwhile, Colonel Burton rejoined his regiment, marched to Cape Charles, and was from thence transported to Fortress Monroe.

Here had crossed Claude with the old man and Sammy, and afterwards the Little Sister—all in five short months.

The first of these was now awaiting his doom in the city jail, Sammy was sleeping in the vault in the Catholic cemetery, at the rural-looking gate of which the old man sat day by day, waiting for the war to end so he might take his body home; the Little Sister, foiled and disappointed, but not despairing, was devising ways and means at St. Vincent de Paul to save the life of her ill-starred friend; and all the while the beautiful days of flowery May were gliding by like a busy shuttle weaving the woof of the history of a wonderful epoch.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE ESCAPE.

THERE is in all animal life a principle which is instinctively antagonistic to death, and yields to the grim monster only when its last citadel is stormed and demolished. So was the Little Sister's courage and hope. Though denied even the privilege of seeing the object of her solicitude, or even of communicating with him by letter, she had never yet despaired of the ultimate favorable answer to her prayers in his behalf.

Night after night she paced the narrow confines of her little room, wringing her hands, and saying to herself, "He must not die. He is innocent, I know; the victim of some base conspiracy. He shall not die. God in Heaven help me to save him!"

She had importuned the Confederate commander. She had supplicated the Secretary of War. She had even knelt before the President. All these had turned a deaf ear to her pleadings, and now she was thrown back upon her own weak resources, and her simple faith in Divine assistance. The fertile brain of Sister Irene was also exhausted in regard to expedients, and the time was short. Still the Little Sister hoped on with an unconquerable heroism.

The two girls had not neglected to seek the old blockader, and enlist his services. His sympathies had already been enlisted. The little pique which he had held against Claude was forgotten in his own burden of sorrow, and Claude's miserable condition.

"It is werry misfortionable," he would say. "It are werry nateral he should be led astray by that ar Buttercup. She war well kalkerlated to dumbfuzzel the best on us, and he war young and pashernate. I b'lieve he are as innercent as a babe unborn, Sistern, and ef we uns could jest save him it would be a good deed; but its werry misfortionable, Sistern, werry misfortionable. Ef I could once git him into my cunner, I mought soon hev him outen all danger. How many more days, Sistern, 'fore he's to be shot?"

"Only one more, Captain, only one more," was the little Sister's sorrowful ejaculation. The long, deep-drawn sigh of the old man, as he again repeated: "It are all werry misfortionable, werry misfortionable," expressed a hopelessness which seemed at last to touch the heart of the brave little girl with a tinge of despair, for tears gathered in her eyes in spite of her efforts to repress them.

Yes, it was the 9th of May. The busy marts of the old town were redolent of strawberries, and fragrant with the odor of roses. The sun shone as brightly, the birds sang as joyously, and the sweet air was as balmy as it is this very day we are writing of those stirring times. But what is this wild cry we hear in the streets, vainly attempted to be suppressed by the authorities? What means the terror-stricken faces, the blanched cheeks, the awful forebodings apparent in the countenances of every one you meet?

A startling rumor has reached the city that the Yankees are landing on the beach below Sewall's Point in great force, and are marching upon the city.

In a moment all is confusion; terror reigns. Men, women and children flock into the streets, run here and there, wringing their hands, asking questions, vainly looking for some place of safety.

To add to the already indescribable state of affairs, it is reported that the Confederates are evacuating the city, and will burn it down during the coming night.

From lip to lip these harrowing reports are circulated, until the whole town trembles with excitement, as with an earthquake.

As evening comes on there is no abatement of the dreadful commotion. The alarm increases with the shadows of evening, and the ever accumulating confirmation of the approach of the enemy.

Suddenly, a furious flame leaps up from the navy yard, and every one imagines the whole city to be on fire. From this time pandemonium is let loose. Regiments of infantry hurry through the streets.

They play no music, now. We only hear the quick tramp, tramp, tramp, as they pass by, going toward the river, where they cross the ferry, or some of the bridges, toward Portsmouth.

Artillery wagons thunder over the cobble-stones, the snap of the driver's lash echoing above the din.

The frightened citizens, with as much of their personal effects as they can carry, rush madly after the troops.

The negroes are struck dumb with wonder, not knowing whether to obey their masters or no; children scream with terror.

It was Claude's last day, and the night the little Sister had set to rescue him.

What would they do, now?—murder him in his cell, take him with them, or forget him in the tumult? She could not tell which.

"Live or die," she exclaimed. "I will find him this night, or perish in the attempt!"

Sister Irene, only, knew of her intention. With the benediction and kisses of that staunch friend, the little nun went tremblingly out into that terrible night on her perilous mission, to breast the tide of a raving mob, infuriated and reckless, with only the simple faith born of a pure devotion for the man she loved, to protect and guide her.

Once outside of the hospital, there was no longer any protection, but, urged forward by the thought that even now they might be strangling him in his cell, she pushed her way

through the surging, flying masses of negroes, soldiers, and citizens, toward the jail.

Not daring to venture down Church Street, the main thoroughfare of the city, through which the soldiers from the entrenched camp and other outposts were pouring, she ran down Fenchurch to Cove Street, a distance of a quarter of a mile, without difficulty or molestation. But the end of her destination lay in a westerly direction, and she must either cross Church Street at Cove, or else proceed to Main at its intersection with Fenchurch, which would be much more difficult to cross, on account of the converging currents of rushing humanity which were uniting at that point.

Guided by her quick, womanly instinct, she chose the former.

Here, just in front of old St. Paul's, she was forced to stop, so great was the crowd on the sidewalk, while in the middle of the street an unbroken line of military, in close column, pressed southward toward the river.

Balked in her undertaking, she stood on the curb, and bit her lips till they bled.

"What does you want, my Little Sister, and why in the name of God are you out in sich a night as this?" said a tall, rough-looking man who was standing at her side, whose voice she readily recognized as that of Captain Evans. "Gineral Jackson and Pocahontas! you is in a werry bad predicament, in this hubbub, my little one."

"Please, sir, take me up in your arms, and lift me over to the other side. I am on an errand of the utmost importance, and must not be delayed."

"That I will, my little Daisy, now, look out for your big bonnet, and cling fast to my neck. This is a right smart stream ter cross," so saying, he wrapped the nun's blue robe around her and catching her up in his stalwart embrace bore her safely through files of glittering bayonets to the other side.

"Now, run, little un, as fast as you ken. It's gittin' werry dark and dangerous fer even a Sister to be about; and these niggers is none too good to resault you, you pretty little thing, you."

But she did not hear the last words of the kind old man. She was gone like a flash, disappearing in the darkness of Cove Street, always black and dingy, but blacker to-night than ever.

Even here, her course was obstructed by flying people, mostly negroes, who not only interfered with her locomotion,

but more than once ran over her, trampling her beneath their feet. But, springing to her pins as rapidly as possible, she groped her way in the almost impenetrable gloom, through crowded street, and noisome alley, until she stood in front of the old jail, her clothing torn, and her little heart fluttering with the combined excitement of fear and exertion.

In the meantime, Claude had been preparing to die. The prison being situated in a somewhat secluded part of the city, he had heard but little of the bustle going on outside, attributing what he did hear to preparations incident to his execution.

He had determined to meet his fate like a brave man, and sat that evening in his cell, with no more sign of trepidation, than if he was only to take a short and ordinary journey on the morrow.

He had faithfully prepared what he termed his confession; he had made his peace with his Maker and his own conscience, and was ready to be offered up.

Once more, since many months, he felt his old manhood come back to him. It was, in fact, a manhood far superior to his former one—a reconstructed character, built upon the ruins of false ideas, and a false education—a condition forced upon him by antecedents and precedents, as old and as obsolete as the laws of Moses. Now, he realized the ennobling fact that he was himself, and that he stood upon a foundation of truth, and not blood; upon a nobility of soul, and not a vain and empty idea of chivalry. His sense of honor, and his estimate of virtue, were all changed now; and if he had his life to live over again, he would do right irrespective of tradition, and uninfluenced by anything the world might say in condemnation of his course, whatever it might be.

As the hour of his dissolution approached, he seemed to gain physical strength. He was hungry, and could not tell why they did not bring his supper as usual.

His eye sparkled with its old lustre. He again looked as young and fresh as he did on that day at Burton's Meeting-house, when he would have dragged the poor preacher down into the woods, and tarred and feathered him. But he would not do that now. No; he was a changed man. He had drunk to the dregs the cup which had been proffered him at his birth, the legacy of a noble but mistaken ancestry; he had awakened from the deleterious effects of its potent poison, to find himself a wretch undone; but now the scales had fallen from his eyes, the true light of God's grace had shone into his heart, and permeated his inner being; and *just as he was* willing to die, he was ready to live.

As the shades of night came down over the antiquated city, enveloping the old jail in its customary dreariness, strange sounds, increasing more and more in violence, began to assail the ear of the condemned prisoner.

There was something going on outside the dull walls of his dungeon, both unusual and alarming. The sound of hurrying footsteps, which at first, was desultory and infrequent, grew in violence, until he imagined the whole city was on the street, and flying as if from a fearful conflagration. From his little window he could catch a glimpse of the passing crowd hurrying by, and see the glare of burning barracks illuminating the sky.

Then came the shrieks of the dismayed, and the curses of the lawless; the negro convicts in the lower cells of the prison taking up the strain, and yelling back their demoniacal shouts in chorus.

The blood of the condemned man ran cold at the fearful thought of some awful calamity, which these disturbances seemed to portend, and he lost sight of his own impending fate, in the uncertainty and horror of that which had come upon the city.

"They are coming! They are coming!" were all the words he could catch from the outside, while "Glory to God!" and "hallelujah!" was the sacrilegious refrain which rocked the damp walls of the old prison, yelled out by at least a score of drunken negroes, and low-down white criminals, who had been arrested that day, and were taking advantage of the perturbed condition of their keepers to make disorder and confusion.

Then, above the roar which arose from the groaning streets, like that of the distant surf, came awful explosions, preceded by vivid flashes of lightning, and the earth rocked as if in the throes of an earthquake.

Claude stood appalled in the middle of his cell, wondering what it all meant, when the sound of heavy feet tramping up the stairs to his door, the dragging of sabres over the steps, and then the jingling of keys and the rattling of bolts assured him that the privacy of his abode was about to be invaded.

Presently there seemed to be an altercation in the corridor and he heard a female voice saying:

"But you will let me go in. I am a Sister of Charity, and the only friend he has in the world."

He heard the ponderous clasp swing from its staple, and as a desperate encounter broke out below, and the soldiers at

the door ran pell-mell down stairs, tumbling over each other in the darkness, a slight figure in a nun's cornet and habit, crept into the dark room, and stood before him.

"Who are you?" he inquired as he peered at the dim outlines of the Little Sister.

"I'm a nun. But for Heaven's sake tarry not to ask questions. Now is your only chance of escape. They are going to take you away with them, and will shoot you to-morrow. Quick, put on this robe. Let me tie this surplice about your face to hide your beard. This cornet will fit you better since your hair is thin. Quick, and fly for your life before they return. It's your last opportunity."

Claude was bewildered and stood like a statue not knowing what to do or say.

"Oh, my dear friend, how can you be so irresolute when your very life depends upon immediate action. Will you let me see you perish after all I have done to save you? Must all my efforts and sacrifices go for nothing? Oh, Claude, my soul's hero, my life's dream, fly, if not for your own sake, for the sake of Mary Burton, who once more has come to save you?"

"And from you, darling?"

"Yes, yes. We may meet again. But if you stay, there is no hope."

The commotion grew more boisterous below.

"And where must I go?"

"To Richmond. To the Peninsula!"

"Back to the Confederate army?"

"By all means. Go, redeem yourself, and whether you win or lose it will all be well. You can regain respect by no other road."

"But my heart is not in it. I can never raise my hand against my country's flag again."

"Be guided this once by me. So far you are innocent of crime. You must not be a renegade. There are thousands who have thought from the beginning as you think now; but fate cast their lot on the wrong side, and they but follow in the line of their duty by sacrificing everything—even conscience, to be with their countrymen. We must not argue here. If you love me, heed my advice, and when the strife is over and you come back, you shall find a sweet haven of rest."

The tumult without was appalling.

Claude was stupefied. The incomprehensible commotion *on the* street, the fearful explosion of magazines, rocking

the prison like an earthquake, the demoniacal struggle below, and the new ideas awakened in his mind so suddenly by the rapid and almost hysterical words and demeanor of the little woman so wrought upon him that he mechanically assisted her in her nervous efforts to array him, and scarcely knowing what he did, suffered himself to be led to the door, and pushed out into the corridor.

Mary staggered back into the darkness of the cell, and the heavy iron door was swung to by some one on the outside and locked.

Unable longer to bear up under the severe tension to which her delicate nerves had been subjected, the brave little nun sank down in a corner of the loathsome den in a deep swoon, from which she did not fully recover until long after midnight. When she did come to herself all was quiet as death in the prison; and over the desolate city there rested the silence of the grave.

A bright May morning dawned.

Pearly drops of dew clung to the iron bars of the little window, sparkling like diamonds in the first rays of the rising sun.

Mary arose and looked out on the street. She saw only negroes. They were running toward Church Street with all their might. The expression of their faces was that of consternation mingled with joy. She listened. Far away on the morning air floated strains of martial music. A hundred bands seemed to be pouring forth the lively melody. Again she listened. They played "Yankee Doodle." It was General Wool marching into the city.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

A DELEGATION of the citizens headed by the mayor, went out to meet the Federal commander at the entrenched camp, and delivered the city into his hands. Thereupon the Federal troops marched in and took possession, in the midst of salvos of cannon, the playing of bands, and the rejoicing of negroes. The outposts of the Confederates had been drawn in the day before, their heavy artillery either spiked or removed to the Portsmouth side of the river, and on the night of the 9th they withdrew entirely from the north side of the

Elizabeth, crossed the Western Branch and made their way toward Richmond on the south side of the James, by the way of Petersburg.

The "Merrimac," still disabled from her encounter with the "Monitor," lay down by Crany Island, where she was blown up on the night of the 11th.

Colonel Burton reached Fortress Monroe just in time to join the expedition against Norfolk.

He rode into the town at the head of his regiment with the familiarity of one who was perfectly well acquainted with its streets.

The usual precautions to prevent surprise were taken by the commanding general, pickets thrown out on the Portsmouth side and defenses begun as far south as Getty's Station in Norfolk County; and in a short while every thing assumed a peaceful aspect.

But leaving the results of this bloodless, but no less important victory of the Federals, to speak for themselves, let us in the short space which is left us proceed to notice that which most directly concerns the well known individuals with whom we have been so familiar, during the perusal of this particular history.

Undismayed by her recent troubles, and now set at liberty by the advent of her new friends, the Federals, Miss Buttercup, with a conscience as easy as ever a woman's could be, at once set up her court and laid her plans to bring into subjection as many, if not more, admirers in blue, as she had ruined, lost and discarded with empty pockets, in gray.

Half of the first day after the evacuation had not passed, ere she was seen riding through the streets of Norfolk, on horseback, in the company of several officers of the new regime. While thus employed, the party met Colonel Burton, who was himself mounted, as he was riding from the newly established head-quarters, at the custom house, up Main Street. As he approached the party, he recognized Miss Buttercup as an old acquaintance and saluted her. For a moment the olive complexion of the dashing equestrienne assumed a crimson hue, and for once she showed some evidence of confusion; but recovering her self-possession in a moment, reined up her horse, and entered into conversation with that officer. She was very flippant in her remarks, treating the colonel with a sort of indifferent familiarity, while he returned her obtrusiveness with a taciturnity that seemed to vex her.

"By the by, Colonel," she remarked, "we have enjoyed *quite* an episode in our beleaguered city for the past few

months, in which your humble servant was an unwilling and rather conspicuous figure."

"How so?" inquired Colonel Burton rather nonchalantly.

"Why you see, that I being one of those unfortunate individuals who sided with the Union cause, have been subject to persecution, and through the perfidy of a gentleman of your own county was imprisoned and have only this very day regained my freedom."

"Indeed! What was the trouble, and of whom do you speak as belonging to my county?"

"Did you know a man by the name of Claude Walsingham —a captain of cavalry in the rebel army?"

"I did. What of him?"

"He was to have been shot this very day. Whether or not he is yet in jail, I do not know."

"Shot, and to-day! Pray what was the charge?"

"Treason, my dear Colonel. He was caught communicating with your people at Fortress Monroe, and sentenced, as I said, to death. This morning was the day of his doom."

"Impossible! I do not believe him guilty of any such offense. If what you tell me is true, there is some treachery," and Colonel Burton flashed a look of suspicion at the impressable woman which sent the blood again to her temples.

"But where did you say he was confined?" he inquired.

"In the city jail. It may be that they took him with them last night."

"I shall see at once. Please excuse me, gentlemen," he said, and rode away without further ceremony.

Meanwhile there was great excitement at the hospital of St. Vincent de Paul. The Little Sister had been missed and the whole Sisterhood was in the utmost consternation in regard to her disappearance. Sister Irene, not knowing the result of her friend's mission, was reticent, only volunteering her services as one who was willing to go out and search for her.

The aid of Captain Evans was solicited, and he and Sister Irene set out about midday for the jail. The streets were entirely divested of white citizens, but overrunning with Yankee soldiers and negroes. The former were insolent, and the latter saucy, and once or twice the old man came very near being arrested, and once he actually knocked a negro down for standing in his way; but they finally reached the jail in safety. They found the doors wide open and all the lower cells deserted. The prisoners had either escaped, or had been liberated. They ascended the stairs and finding the door of Claude's cell shut and fastened, they knocked.

The Little Sister answered.

"She ar in thar as shure's my name's Revel Evans," exclaimed the old man.

"Is it you, my Little Sister?" called out Sister Irene.

"Yes, my darling," replied the prisoner, recognizing the voice of her friend.

The door had been locked by a passing turnkey, immediately after the escape of Claude.

"Are you alone, Sister?"

"Yes. Pray relieve me as soon as possible, if in your power; I am very hungry."

"That I will, jest as yearly as I kin git a hammer and chisel," replied the old man, as he hastened down the stairway in quest of the tools he had mentioned.

He was not long in procuring these, and the work of prying out the staple, to one so accustomed to the use of such tools as Captain Evans, was a matter of only a moment. As the door swung open, the two girls rushed into each other's arms.

"And the Captain?" inquired Sister Irene.

"Is safe, I hope."

"Thank God! Now we have found you, all is well."

Captain Evans regarded the happy meeting of the two nuns with feelings of great gratification, remarking:

"This are one of the happiest repochs of my resistance. I feel as ef I war ev some sarvice arter all."

Scarcely had the greeting subsided, when Colonel Burton rode up to the jail, alighted at the door, and, tying his horse to the court-house fence, mounted the steps. Hearing the sound of voices upstairs he ascended.

Even before he reached the corridor, he was shocked at the sound of familiar voices. His limbs almost refused to obey his irresolute will, so paralyzed was he at the thought of the revelations which awaited him.

He tried to reach the corridor at a single bound, but his unguided foot slipped, and he imagined he would die before he reached the top. The flight of steps was not high, however, and really before he could realize it, he was at the door, just as the happy trio were preparing to decamp.

One glance at the little nun was sufficient.

"Mary, my darling, darling sister!"

"My brother!"

"Which ter make a good picter, you and me orter do likewise," ventured the old man, with a nod at Sister Irene.

But the countenance of that woman was a study for an

artist. For a moment she gazed at the face of the handsome officer, and her own assumed the pallidity of death.

She reeled to the wall, and supported herself against it.

From where she stood, with her eyes now averted from the embracing brother and sister, she could look down the corridor through the wide-open door.

Suddenly she seemed to recover her equanimity; then as suddenly, quivered from head to feet with intense excitement. With a heart-rending shriek, which startled the little group, and echoed through the empty prison, she sprang forward, and extending her arms, clutched the tall officer frantically around the neck. A short, sharp report, not louder than the pop of an air-gun followed, and the poor girl muttering: "That horrid woman!" slid lifeless to the floor, before Colonel Burton could catch her in his arms.

She fell on her face, and from a small hole not bigger than a pea, under the scapula, a little to the left of the spine, there oozed a few drops of blood which stained slightly the blue habit she wore.

"My God, what is this!" exclaimed Colonel Burton, as he stooped and raised the limp form, supporting the head of the now ghastly nun, on his bent knee.

As he gazed into the pale face, paler than the white cornet, the eyes opened, blazed wistfully into his own for a second, and as a sweet smile played about the parting lips, and her chin quivered just a little, the hands fell to the floor, the eyelids drooped half closed, and with a sigh the spirit of the beautiful Sister fled away.

"She is dead! she is dead!" shrieked Mary.

"And to save me!" groaned Colonel Burton, as he tremblingly raised the left hand and singling out the third finger fondled the ring she wore.

"It war a werry misfortionable circumstance," remarked Captain Evans, in a husky voice. "S'pozen I retempt to overhaul the one who did it?"

"Go, sir, for God's sake, quick," replied the officer.

But the assassin had disappeared.

The Colonel's horse was gone, the street deserted, and only the form of a dashing female rider could be seen turning into Granby street, beyond the court-house lawn.

And, now, reader, we come to that turn in our little history where after a few more words by way of conclusion, we must part.

With the closing of Sister Irene's eyes, all evidence of her murderer vanished.

Enough could be surmised, however, to make sure that the bullet which pierced her heart was intended for Colonel Burton, and was fired by a woman. To shield her old friend the devoted nun had sacrificed her own life.

During the obsequies, Colonel Burton remained at the hospital, and when he departed from Norfolk with orders to join McClellan on the Peninsula, he left Mary in the care of the good Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul.

Communication being opened up between Norfolk and the Eastern Shore, Captain Evans watched his chances for a good run, and in the old "cunner," with green cedar boughs for a canopy, he silently and alone transported the remains of Sammy to their last resting-place in his mother's garden.

It was again the 10th of May, now 1865.

The war was over. Colonel Burton, who had retired a year before with a wound received in the battle of the Wilderness, from which, thanks to a gentle nurse, in the person of Miss Kate Moore, now Mrs. Colonel Burton, he was entirely recovered, was sitting on the piazza of his new residence at Moorefield, his wife and sister beside him.

Around his beautiful residence, fresh with paint and blooming with every comfort, stretched on every side green fields of growing grain.

Old Daniel, again a widower, sat on the porch steps, bent with years, but only waiting a nod to do "'Mars Burton's" bidding. Captain Evans in his shirt-sleeves, chewed his quid with his accustomed gusto, and told stories of blockade running.

Daniel had said that a boat was coming up the creek behind the thicket, but no one had paid any attention to so commonplace an event.

Suddenly the barking of the dogs in the back-yard, called the attention of the little group in the porch to that direction, and they see a man approaching, supporting himself on crutches.

His suit, which had once been gray, and was that of a private in the Confederate army, is the color of the ground. His jacket is tattered and torn, his straw hat out at the crown, and his coarse brogans literally tied to his feet. A thick auburn beard covers the lower part of his face, and long locks of brown hair fall to his shoulders. His face is pale and emaciated, but his eye is bright and blue, and though his left leg is stiff and useless, he still seems to possess a *goodly* amount of physical strength. As he approaches the

stoop, Colonel Burton rises to give him a kindly greeting. The ladies also full of sympathy for a wounded soldier returning to his old home, bearing in his body the evidence of an unhappy but honorable service, prepare themselves to offer him a hearty reception.

But Love's quickening instincts are ever on the alert.

With a thrilling cry of joy Mary Burton runs down the steps, and trembling like a frightened bird, nestles her head in the bosom of Claude Walsingham.

THE END.